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A S P E C T R E O F P O W E R

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CHARLES EGBERT CRADDOCK

[pseud.]

Mary Noailles Murfree



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I

IT so chanced that Eve, with all her primeval curiosity, dwelt in the Cherokee town of Great Tellico. Hence came disaster. To the inquisitiveness of the woman it was always imputed, although the undisciplined heart of man, the turbulent impulses of ambition, and the serpentine supersubtlety of a covetous political scheme were potent elements. Little, indeed, such as she might seem concerned with matters of high import. From afar, unindividualized among scores of the other subservient Cherokee women standing on the banks of the glittering Tennessee River, she had watched the approach of the herald of the embassy. A Choctaw Indian he was revealed as he ran holding broadly outstretched in each hand the great white wing of a swan, streaked with symbolic lines of white clay. The headmen of Tellico, the warriors of note, and the "beloved men" swiftly assembled in the "beloved square" to greet the arrival of the ambassador himself, and with no presentiment of personal significance in the event, she beheld the entry of the splendidly bedight Choctaw chief, Mingo Push-koosh.

Through the forests he had elected to come, and as he advanced with that wonderful, running gait of the Choctaw Indian, who could outwind, it was said in that day, a swift horse, he sustained impassively the eager, fixed gaze of the hundreds of Cherokees assembled in his honor.

The iconoclast, who was not born yesterday, was here and there in the crowd, and had a word of covert scoffing at his neglect of the great advantages of water carriage afforded by the numerous fine rivers of the Cherokee country ; for the Choctaws had but little familiarity with navigation, owing to the few and very limited streams of their own region, and notoriously, of all nations of Indians, they could not swim.

Envy, however, could hardly spare a fling at so imperious a figure as the Mingo presented as he stood in the "beloved square" and delivered in rapid, fervid, poetic diction his oration of greeting to the headmen of Tellico. The afternoon sunlight glittered on the silver wrist-plates on his muscular, bare arms, his gorget and "earbobs" of the same metal, and a half dozen strands of the glossily white, fresh-water pearls of the region, exceedingly large and regularly shaped, which hung about the neck of his white, dressed doeskin hunting-shirt. His head was not polled after the fashion of the Cherokees, and his hair grew thick and long. A great cluster of scarlet flamingo feathers stood high in the midst of the straight, black locks, and he wore a broad, silver band on the backward slant of his forehead, artificially flattened thus in infancy, according to the tribal custom. His leggings and moccasins were also scarlet. He bore no arms except a pair of handsome, silver-mounted pistols in his embroidered belt.

The gentle breeze carried his full, rich, guttural tones to the uttermost outskirts of the crowd, and suddenly it was swayed by a new sensation and a straining of necks to see. For although the Choctaws beyond all tribes were most addicted to the punctilio of ceremonial observances, and scorned and resisted innovation, the voice which followed his words, substituting the familiar Cherokee equivalents, was the voice of no Indian interpreter. It was suave and fluent and easy of comprehension, but now and again an idiom occurred, a

method of construction essentially French. For beside the Mingo, and in front of his escort of a dozen Choctaw braves, stood a glittering object, a white man, a French officer in full uniform, and with his hair curled and plaited and powdered.

The headmen of Tellico, all decorously listening to the ambassador, all respectfully gazing upon his bright animated face, as he declaimed his plea for welcome and his pleasure in beholding them, could not altogether cloak their surprised interest and covert glances at this resplendent apparition in the lowly functions of an interpreter. It was a relief when Push-koosh openly alluded to his companion, and he himself repeated in Cherokee the explanation of his appearance in this capacity, and they were free to let their eyes rest unrestrainedly upon him.

In his clear, ringing, military enunciation, he stated that the official Choctaw interpreter with whom they had set forth on the long journey from Fort Condé de la Mobile had sickened by the way, and sinking very low they had been obliged to strangle him, death being inevitable. But they had left his body on a scaffold out of reach of wild animals, whither the official "bone-picker" should be sent on their return to the southern country to perform the last sad rites of the Choctaw religion (which seems to have had few rites other than these frightful funeral observances). For these reasons they were fain to crave the indulgence of the great Cherokee chiefs for appearing without that essential functionary, an interpreter, since the lieutenant, Jean Marie Edouard Bodin de Laroche, was but scantily acquainted with the charming Cherokee language, so musical and of so elegant a construction, and Mingo Push-koosh, to his infinite regret, had of it no knowledge save a few scattered phrases.

The discerning and thoughtful Tanaesto, standing in the group of brilliantly arrayed Cherokee headmen, silently

eyeing them both, noted naught significant in the face of the Mingo as the untoward fate of the strangled interpreter was recounted. This assistance in shuffling off the mortal coil would have been to the Choctaw a matter of course and a national custom. But Tanaesto knew that the white man was not used to so summary a disposition of the inconvenient dying. He was subject, like all the Catholic French, to many stringent religious restrictions, chiefly pertaining to the precise method in which he might take life, and although he looked as stanch as steel, and as glittering, his face was young and bland and as unmoved as if he were reciting a fiction, — which indeed he was! The heart of Tanaesto weighed very light with the thought, — there had been no interpreter to die.

“My brother,” he said in a low voice to Colonnah, to test his joyful suspicion, “why does a French officer speaking but indifferent Cherokee come to us with a Choctaw embassy without an interpreter from the governor of Louisiana?”

The wary Colonnah replied instantly. “That the Choctaw embassy may go back no wiser in certain things than the French officer may desire.”

The disclosure of a scheme within a scheme was thus promised. The series of notable successes which the Cherokees had achieved in 1760, in their war against the British, had been nullified in the campaign of the succeeding year by the inability of the French to convey to them adequate ammunition at the crisis of their final defeat. Doubtless some new plan was now imminent, some fresh attempt in contemplation to aid them to throw off the British yoke. Tanaesto’s heart leaped at the thought, although a solemn treaty of peace had just been signed at Charlestown with the Royal Governor of South Carolina, and a deputation of Cherokee chiefs now, in the early spring of 1762, were on the way to England as guests invited to visit his majesty King George in London.¹

The craft of the Indians rendered craft difficult to disguise, and Tanaesto could but wonder if Mingo Push-koosh knew or suspected aught of the limitations of his powers or the secrets of his mission thus withheld from him.

His fine voice died away at last on the bland air; the oratorical display in which the Indians all delighted and the Choctaws so much excelled had been elaborately exploited; the stir of the wind, the lapsing currents of the river, were barely audible in the silence that seemed still to vibrate with the pulsings of his eloquent periods.

Then another voice arose, deep, full, impressive, as Moy Toy, the great chief of Tellico, pronounced the stereotyped sentences of welcome and protestations of a desire of friendship.

The Choctaw responded sonorously, "*Aharattle-la phena chemanumbole!*"² (I shall firmly shake hands with your discourse.) Whereupon Moy Toy, with eagle feathers upon his head and a splendid garb of feather-woven fabrics, advanced and grasped with both hands the Choctaw's arm around the wrist; then seized him anew about the elbow; and again with the like fervent pressure around the arm close to the shoulder, as being near the heart. He drew back from the visitor for one silent moment. Then he waved a great fan of eagle feathers above the head of the ambassador, the plumes stroking him gently, and his formal reception was complete.

The Choctaw turned smilingly to the crowd, which was presently in motion dispersing along the river bank and among the scattered dwellings of the town. The official group of headmen had broken up into informal knots, and among them Push-koosh moved with a suave but princely arrogance, as tolerating the adulation which was equally his custom and his expectation. He had several claims to special consideration, of none of which was he oblivious, and

all of which exerted a marked influence upon his personality. He enjoyed a certain distinction because of his well-known acuteness, his employment in the French interest, his war record, and his undoubted courage, which was the more noted because the Choctaws were not always considered brave; for although fighting furiously in defense of their own territory, they were accounted half-hearted and even timorous in invasion and aggression. Moreover, he had much family influence, having four elder brothers, all noted warriors, who championed his every plan and took that prideful, solicitous, censorious, half-paternal account of him characteristic of the fraternal senior, and often resented and ill-requited by the sophisticated Benjamins even of civilized tribes. To this simple trait of family affection is doubtless due the name by which he was known; for throughout his life and to the day of his death he was called Push-koosh, "Baby." If he had any other name, it is not of record in the history of his times, in which, although cruel as death, hard as steel, and cunning as craft itself, this Choctaw warrior always incongruously appears as "Prince Baby," Mingo Push-koosh.

The suavity and politic amiability of the carriage of the French toward the savage, which had so marked an influence on the earlier stages of the development of this country, were never more definitely illustrated than in the face of the young officer, Laroche. Its intelligence, its alertness, the military arrogance in the pose of the head, rendered the sudden, bright softness of his smile as flattering as a personal tribute. From an athletic point of view, his slender, erect, sinewy figure coerced the respect of his hosts, and in securing their friendship and confidence, he had a great advantage in his very tolerable command of the Cherokee language. His linguistic accomplishments were already considerable, but before he left Fort Condé de la Mobile, he was set to

work under the instruction of the official interpreter, by the order of his superior officer, and he had acquired a colloquial facility as a military duty with the diligence which he would have manifested in mastering military theories and tactical problems. He talked continually, with much ease and good-fellowship, and a sort of elastic, volatile gaiety. But he showed a deeply emotional impressionability. He manifested great and genuine pleasure in the aspect of the country. He gazed long and silently upon the azure summits and infinite lengths of the Great Smoky Mountains, as they received the last suffusion of the red, western sunlight like a benediction, and glowed to purer, higher, finer phases of color, becoming densely purple, then delicately amethystine, then all transparent and roseate. As they grew so crystalline of effect as to realize to the imagination the splendid jeweled luminosities of the Apocalyptic jasper, he caught his breath, exclaiming, "*Nanne-Yah! Nanne-Yah!*" (The mountains of God!) He declared to his entertainers that in Old France he was born near mountains such as these (for he was not of the Canadian French, who since the days of Iberville had so heavily recruited the ranks of the soldiery in Louisiana), and that he had no doubt that this mutual nativity to the heights was the reason why he already felt toward them as to brothers. Yet he was not bent upon flattery; for he was alone with Push-koosh when he said again and again, as they walked beside the Tennessee River, and he noted the swift flow of its currents all bedight in red and gold under the sunset sky, "*Ookka chookoma intaa!*" (How the beautiful water glides along!)

He broke presently from the pensive contemplation of its charms and stopped short with a crisp ringing cry, "*Holà! là! là!*" Push-koosh, glancing about for the cause of this excitement, perceived at a little distance some Cherokee youths, who were leaping from the heights of a craggy eminence and diving into the rippling depths with a temer-

ity and facility alike admirable. But Push-koosh had no affinity with amphibian traits, being himself, in common with the rest of his tribe, unable to swim. He resented the interest and approval which the Frenchman accorded the divers, sundry of whom were now breasting the current with great speed, strength, and skill, and declared that it was beneath his ambassadorial dignity to waste the time in watching a half score specimens of the Cherokee Kan-noona (bullfrog), as they called the creature in their jargon, swim a race. He could not wait for this ! Did the officer not see that the fires of split cane were already alight in the great state-house, whither they must at once repair to drink of the cacina ("the black drink") with the headmen, as became visitors of distinction ? Nevertheless, as they resumed their progress, Push-koosh himself, with the interest which a man of an active, outdoor life must needs feel in athletic feats, glanced again and again over his shoulder at the expert divers.

"I wonder they don't drown !" he said at last sincerely. Then perhaps equally sincerely, "I wish they would !"

"*Mon tendre Bébé !*" cried the mercurial Frenchman in delight. The incongruity daily illustrated between the cruel, savage traits of the chief and his gentle, infantile sobriquet was of an unceasing and engaging drollery to Laroche's mind, and doubtless often proved of service in keeping amicable relations between them.

Wending their way through the scattered dwellings of the town, and skirting the rows of log cabins on each side of the "beloved square," they approached the state-house or rotunda hard by, built on the summit of a high, artificial mound of earth. The circuit of the fifteen Cherokee towns³ burned by Colonel Grant, commanding the British forces, in the punitive measures following his victory at Etchoee the previous year, the Indians being powerless to resist, as their ammunition was exhausted, did not extend so far as Tellico Great, and therefore its aspect was as before the war,

save indeed for the tokens of the prowess of the Cherokees themselves — the great dismantled Fort Loudon, still standing a massive, lonely shadow in the distance, which they had blockaded and reduced, massacring the garrison, and here and there down the river the stark chimneys of the burned dwellings of the murdered British colonists. A white glimmer stole out of the tall, narrow portal of the conical state-house, which showed dark and solid against the ethereal shadows of the atmosphere. For the blue dusk had fallen on the enchanted land. The wooded mountains loomed dim and sombre on the clear horizon ; the encompassing primeval forests were thronged with glooms ; the river was now a gray shadow, and now an elusive, silver glister ; the many lowly roofs of the dwellings of the Indian town were dully glimpsed here and there in the light that flickered out through the open doors from hearthstones all aglow ; and as the officer paused on the high mound at the portal of the state-house, and looked back over the clare-obscuré of the unaccustomed scene, he caught the scintillations of a star a-glitter in the pallid expanse of the pearly skies. It was like a signal to him. Aldebaran ! how long since he had seen it, poised over a craggy mountain summit, sending its brilliant, red lustres down through the fringes of the evergreen pine. Not thus, not thus had he seen it since the star and he were together at home ! It was like the sudden greeting of a friend in a far and foreign land. He responded instantly as to a personal appeal. He turned suddenly and airily kissed his hand, the brilliant star shattered into a thousand stars among the tears in his eyes. Push-koosh, accustomed to ebullitions of his emotional, susceptible nature, gave him but one glance of superficial surprise, and together they entered the dome-like building. The red clay walls of its interior were illumined by the white light of the burning split canes, while the dim, blue scene beneath the home-star lay outside in the darkness.

Only for one moment did Laroche realize the poignancy of exile, although the homesick pang for the recollection of his kindred and his far-distant birthplace was supplemented by another hardly less acute, with a spurious domiciliary sense, for the scenes at the fort, his quarters, the presence of his brother officers. The more valid cause of troublous thought and sense of solitude,—that he was apart from them all, alone among wild and bloody savages, the Choctaws of the French alliance hardly less to be feared in their alert dissimulation and treacherous habit than the open ferocity of the Cherokees of the British faction, the only man of his country in a hundred miles of these dense and sombre wildernesses, in a torn and distracted region subject to a national enemy,—these practical considerations did not smite him at all. Even his æsthetic griefs were all forgotten in another instant, and with his swift, volatile transitions he was absorbed in the interior of the building. It was large enough to accommodate an audience of several hundred people, and ample illumination was afforded by the split cane, which, arranged in lines and serpentine convolutions along a low mound of earth in the centre of the clay floor and burning only at one end, was consumed very gradually, and would furnish light for a considerable time. The cane gave out but little smoke, ethereal, hazy, vaguely blue, mounting into the shadowy vault of the lofty dome above the heads of the crowd. Around the interior of the building, some four feet distant from the wall and supporting the unseen timbers of the roof, was a series of columns, and in the space between this colonnade and the wall was a continuous divan or bench, deftly made of cane, artificially whitened, and extending all around the circular structure. Here on the further side, opposite the door, were seated the headmen of the town, while those of lower grade were ranged according to rank, to the right and to the left. The more insignificant or younger tribesmen

stood in the open spaces nearest the entrance, and seated on the floor on either side of the narrow portal were groups of women, admitted in lenient indulgence of feminine curiosity.

The two strangers were conducted as visitors of distinction to seats, one on either side of Moy Toy. The barbarous Choctaw, with his quick, racial adaptation to all the minutiae of ceremonial, peculiarly elaborate in its observance, with his grace, his fitting words, his proud yet affable demeanor, was hardly more acceptable to the Indian scheme of etiquette than the Frenchman, foreign, white, strange, though he was. There was something about this officer that appealed singularly to the vivid imagination of the Cherokees, — the silken softness of his courtesy, his easily stirred and obvious sentimental emotions, his volatile pleasure in the passing moment, his quick changeableness in every current of the air, and yet incongruously, a certain bellicose keenness, and steadiness, and hardness in the glance of his bland eyes. He was like a military butterfly, if one could but attribute the potentiality of danger and venom and antagonism to so aerial and brilliant a flutterer. His very gestures riveted their attention as he expressively shrugged his shoulders or lifted his eyebrows in gay surprise, or contracted them in frowning doubt. These eyebrows were dark and distinctly marked, and he had long, dark lashes, but his eyes were of a light brown tint such as gravel shows when clear water runs above a sunlit channel. He wore his own light brown hair in lieu of a fashionable wig, but the long queue and the curls on the temples were heavily powdered, which was of complimentary significance ; for it was by no means the habit of the French officers to submit to the *gêne* of such vanities while on the march in the wilderness, although in New Orleans the Marquis de Vaudreuil had long sought to maintain some state, since indeed he had first succeeded Bien-

ville as governor of Louisiana, and fostered manners of ceremony, as he afterwards did in Canada, whither he was now transferred. The suggestion that Laroche was charged with a secret mission within a mission added importance to his personality, which Push-koosh obviously resented, now and again assertively flaunting his few Cherokee phrases, even in addressing his *quasi* interpreter, and more than once essaying some very queer French. The men looked at the officer with intense curiosity, and the women, as ever addicted to novelty, with open-eyed admiration, as he smoked the "friend-pipe" while he sat beside Moy Toy, who in his finest otter-skin robe was all a-glitter with many swaying fringes of "roanoke," with a broad, gleaming collar of white swan's down, and with streaks of white clay across his forehead. If Laroche dreamed of the approaching ordeal, he awaited it with the calm of a philosopher and the courage of a soldier.

Presently there entered two "beloved men," each bearing a conch shell high in the right hand. They first crossed the apartment, one going to the right, the other to the left, singing mystic words in a low tone as they came; then once more taking a transverse course, they met in front of Moy Toy and the two guests of distinction, to whom they presented, with both hands, the two shells full of the so-called consecrated beverage. As these were lifted, with both hands, to the lips of the guests, the two "beloved men" broke forth with a sonorous bass note, "Yo!" then with a tenor effect they sang the syllable, "He!" prolonged to the utmost possibility of holding the breath, during which sound the visitor must continue to drink the cacina. It required, perhaps, all the strength of mind and stomach which the French officer could muster, but he did not desist nor lower the shell till the gasping "Wah!" placed a period to his torments.

Others then partook of the black drink in turn, and pre-

sently amidst the wreaths of blue smoke and the white flare of the burning cane, while the earthen drums began to beat sonorously, sinuous, leaping shadows were flung across the hard, clay floor and on the red walls of the circular building; for the eagle-tail dance was in progress in the presence of the honored guests, the great fans of feathers waving high in the uplifted hands of the agile warriors, as they sprang elastically into the air, exhibiting many intricate steps and difficult attitudes.

These solemn politico-religious ceremonies of welcome concluded, the Cherokees gave themselves over to various devices to amuse and entertain their guests, for this was a characteristic trait of their hospitality. There would be horse-races on the morrow and dances again, but without significance either political or religious, and long and elaborate feastings, for they could set forth a table with "fifty different viands." The Cherokees had not at this period begun the downward course, — the relinquishment of their national customs, primitive manufactures, religion, method of government, habits of extreme cleanliness, — the wholesale degeneration which seems inevitable before new standards, new customs, new religion, a new nationality, can be adjusted to a people in a state of transition. The night being as yet but little spent, one of their ancient pantomimes⁴ was essayed for the entertainment of the guests; and during its performance the frequency of the ringing laugh of the French officer, and the grunt of approval of the Choctaw chief, brought the same expression of gratified complacency and chastened thankfulness to the anxious faces of Moy Toy and the other headmen of Tellico Great that sophisticated hosts now wear upon the success of an entertainment upon which important interests depend. It began with a surprise. Suddenly a bulky shadow fell within the doorway, — the women clustering about the entrance shrieked in a sort of delighted affright and scuttled aside.

The heavy, guttural laugh of the Indian — a merry soul at his sports — fell iteratively on the air. A bear had entered, clumsy, heavily shuffling, snuffing tentatively about, evidently to be imagined as ranging the woods, and with now and then a glance over his shoulder to see another bear ponderously lumbering in. So close was the imitation of the ursine gait and ungainliness, so crafty the disguise in the beast's paws and hide, distended to full proportions by concealed wooden hoops, that one might have believed the manifestation genuine but for a lamenting “stage-whisper,” as it were, delivered in plaintive Cherokee, touching a bit of the burning cane which had lodged upon the slant of a too inquisitive snout nosing about the fire. It was hastily brushed off by one of the young tribesmen of the audience, all of whom laughed gleefully at the mischance and the helpless plight of the singed Bruin.

And now entered two hunters in full sylvan array. The bears skulked, chiefly among the audience ; the nimrods stalked them ; the bears fled ; the hunters pursued ; the beasts turned at bay, — when the hunters themselves fled frantically, amidst howls of derision from the younger people. This mockery seemed to restore the nerve of the hunters, who presently returned to the effort and with such ardor that they finally “treed” the bears, who nimbly climbed the sleek, round columns that supported the roof of the edifice. Thence they were pulled down forcibly, first by one foot, then the others ; at last all fell, hunters and bears together, in an indiscriminated heap on the floor, where after a terrific mock struggle, the bears were dispatched by the expedient of cutting their throats, with a vast effusion of blood and howls of remonstrance from the beasts, expressed in excellent Cherokee.

The two vanquished animals as early as practicable crept out of their skins, left weltering in the blood on the floor, and mingled with their admirers in the audience, laughing

a great deal and discussing the play :— how the struggle might have been prolonged but for this and that ; how one bear, according to his own account, need not have been killed at all, so expert a beast was he, except that he had yielded himself at last a sacrifice to the popular entertainment ; and how one hunter could have easily slain this same boastful bear at the very outset by a single blow on the head, to which his more than bearish awkwardness exposed him, but was moved to spare him and thus extend his career, also from the disinterested motive of promoting and conserving the sport of the indulgent audience.

It was all indeed very cleverly done, as even Laroche thought, who had seen pantomimes in Paris, and Push-koosh manifested as much hilarious good will as the Choctaw "Prince Baby" ever permitted himself to experience. The French officer, however, despite his absorption in the histrionic display, had not been unmindful of the notables in the audience either in Paris or here. More than once to-night his gaze was caught by a pair of eyes large and gentle, luminous as a deer's and as untamed in expression, appropriately set in the face of one of the Cherokee women. She was hardly in her first youth, although she seemed singularly fresh, alert, spirited, enjoying the pantomime with childish delight. She was evidently not less than twenty-two or three years of age, and he being rather elderly himself, — some twenty-eight years, — thought this well advanced in life and an age of wisdom. She was slender and, like all the Cherokees, of notable height, and when the crowd was out of the state-house he saw her again, glimmering with willowy grace in the moonlight. The distorted, gibbous sphere of pearl was high above the violet mountains and the gray and misty valleys, and he thought the woman beautiful and picturesquely placed in the solemn and splendid environment of the ranges, for he was accustomed to the bizarre details of savage raiment. The skirt of her tunic-like

garb of white, dressed doeskin reached a trifle below the knee, and she wore the long, white, doeskin buskin, fitting closely, that came half as high; around each leg, below the knee, was tied a soft, dressed otter-skin, hung with glittering, metal "bell buttons," that tinkled as she walked. Her hair, anointed and glossy in the moonlight, was tied and dressed high on the head, and was stuck full of the quills of the white pigeon. Her head was clearly defined against the dark blue of the instarred sky, as she threw it backward and gazed at the moon as if to verify some calculation of time, its light full in her lustrous eyes. Then she turned, and running swiftly past, disappeared in the violet shadows.

He did not soon think of her again. She was only a picturesque element in this state of quaint barbarity, a momentary incident in the scenes of an evening over-crowded with impressive grotesqueries. He had no idea to whom Mingo Push-koosh alluded when he said suddenly, "*Eho in-ta-na-ah!*!" (The woman has mourned the appointed time!)

The two French emissaries were alone now; they had been conducted to a building called the stranger-house, designed for the accommodation of casual guests, and which was assigned to them to be their headquarters during their stay. It too was furnished with the row of cane divans around the walls, which served as benches during the day and as beds at night. The house was the usual cabin of the Indians, built without nails, or a hinge, or a bit of metal in any sort, yet "genteel and convenient and so very secure, as if it were to screen them from an approaching hurricane," says an old British trader, who lived for many years in one of them. The posts were of the most durable wood and deeply set in the ground, the timbers were accurately fitted to one another, the wall plates, rafters, and eave boards had been all stanchly bound together with the elastic splints of white oak or hickory, and

with strips of wet buffalo hide, which tighten and harden as they dry. A partition separated the room from another, wherein was disposed the Choctaw escort. Within and without, the building was whitewashed with the coarse, marly clay of the region, and the walls sent back with responsive, silver glimmers the moonlight, falling through the narrow door and into the face of the officer, who had stretched himself at length in full uniform on the divan, to rest a bit before divesting himself of his military finery and disposing himself to slumber. The ceremonies and excitements of the evening, following a day of exertion and hard marching, had resulted in making his eyelids heavy.

“*Omeh!*” (Yes!) he assented, hardly hearing the remark, and answering at random.

Push-koosh sat upright on the opposite side of the room as if he could know no fatigue, and gazed loweringly across at the Frenchman.

“*Che-a-sa-ah!*” (I am displeased with you!) the Choctaw hissed out. “What makes your lying tongue so strong?”

The French lieutenant roused himself. “*Mon cher enfant,*” he declared, “I know you consider a lie no disgrace, it being your daily food, but I have told you once, and I tell you again, that if you throw it into my teeth I will beat that flat head of yours flatter than it is!”

“You don’t even know of whom I am speaking — you answer like a child!” said Push-koosh in a mollified tone.

Something had come to him out of the night, the moonlight, the soft lustre of dark eyes, — something as intangible as the flickering illusions of the heat lightning, as inexplicable as the fleeting wind, as tenuous as the wing of a moth, — a fancy! — and he must needs talk of it. Therefore he would concede. He would forego his resentment for this cavalier inattention. He smiled as if he had been in jest.

"*Unta?*" (Well?) said Laroche interrogatively.

"*Eho in-ta-na-ah!*" Push-koosh repeated.

The versatile Frenchman was sore smitten with sleep. "What woman?" he said drowsily. "What mourning?"

"Her husband is dead! The Muscogee killed him three years ago!" said Push-koosh, with stalwart satisfaction in the fact. "And she has mourned the appointed time. You could have seen, but that you are a blind French mole, that her hair is no longer flowing loose, but is anointed and tied and dressed full of white quills!"

Sleep suddenly quitted its hold on the French lieutenant. He lifted himself alertly on one elbow and looked animatedly at Push-koosh. "*Eho chookoma!*" (The beautiful woman!) he cried with enthusiasm. "Not so much of a mole as you think! *Pas si bête, mon bijou. Pas cette espèce de bête!!*"

He shook his wise head with emphasis and laid himself down again. Push-koosh glowered at him with a sudden, angry fear. This fervor of admiration on the part of the French lieutenant boded ill to that ethereal fancy which had fallen about the Choctaw chief as lightly as a gossamer web of the weaving spider, and now held him like a network of steel chains. He said abruptly, with seeming irrelevance and his infantile candor, "I wish you had killed yourself last week!"

For the mercurial Frenchman had often seizures of deep despondency, in which he sometimes announced with sincerity that he designed to place a period to his existence. Such a crisis had supervened on the journey hither, in which, however, Push-koosh was concerned as little as might be. True, there had been some peculiarly irritating incidents in their relations; they baited each other, and bickered on slight occasion, and argued violently on untenable grounds, for which neither cared an iota, and conducted themselves generally as young men do when constrained

to work together with but scant personal sympathy. But Laroche's discontent had a far more serious source. He was disappointed of the distinction which he had hoped to attain in this mission.

Apart from the diplomatic and secret details with which he was intrusted, and the check that he was expected to maintain upon the loyalty, or rather the suspected disloyalty of Push-koosh, whose personal presence was necessary to reconcile certain ancient enmities between the Choctaws and Cherokees, and thus facilitate and set forth the special values of the French alliance, Laroche was charged with an affair of professional importance which Push-koosh imagined was the only reason that he had been ordered to accompany the Choctaw embassy, — so crafty were the methods of the French with the crafty savages. Laroche's open instructions contemplated the investigation of certain obstructions in the *Rivière des Chéraquis* (since called the Great Tennessee), which had hitherto proved an insuperable bar to the continuous transportation of goods from New Orleans to the Cherokee Nation by means of that great waterway. Not trinkets, the Indians craved, not paints, nor beads, nor even cutlery, but those costly treasures of arms, powder, and lead which the Cherokees valued beyond all things, because without constant and adequate supplies of such munitions of war they could never hope to take the field again, eventually throw off the yoke of the British, and keep foothold on the land which was their own, and which they loved with all the fervent devotion of the mountaineer to his native heights. Therefore they had hitherto listened to the counsels of the French, who were now especially eager to meet all expectations, perhaps because they were still involved themselves in hostilities with the English elsewhere, perhaps because they still cherished that old scheme of so many visionaries — from the logical plans of Iberville, futilely projected so long ago, to the

subtle intrigues of the German Jesuit, Christian Priber, only twenty-five years previous — to invade the Carolinas and Georgia at the head of twelve thousand warriors of confederated Indian tribes.

But the transportation of supplies to the Cherokees by pack-train overland was impracticable, since the intervening country was held by the hostile Chickasaws, ever devoted to the British, and the French had still a lively recollection of their defeats by this intrepid tribe at the towns of Ash-wick-boo-ma, where D'Artaguette met his cruel fate, and Ackia, the scene of the discomfiture of Bienville. Therefore in the Cherokee War, a large pettiaugre laden with war-like stores was sent up the Mississippi from New Orleans, armed with swivel guns to repress the Chickasaws, who in flying squads nevertheless harassed the progress of the boat by a sharp musketry delivered from the river bluffs. This danger passed, the expedition failed for a different reason. It returned bootless, having abandoned the attempt on account of the insurmountable obstructions to navigation in the Cherokee River.

The French authorities at New Orleans had good reason to doubt the report of the extent of these difficulties, for hitherto their boats had ascended occasionally to Great Tellico, — perhaps in a different stage of the water. They ordered a survey of the locality with a view of such removal of the reefs as might afford a practicable channel at all seasons, — a second earnest effort to meet the needs of the Cherokees, with a systematic and continuous supply of stores, being in contemplation.

Laroche, who had served as a lieutenant of engineers as well as of artillery, had been charged with the duty of removing the obstruction if practicable, and a pettiaugre laden with such means as were deemed fitted to further this design had been dispatched up the Mississippi and Ohio in advance of the expedition overland from Fort Tombecbé to

meet him at the point where the navigation of the Cherokee River became difficult. The young officer had expected to encounter some reefs, a goodish stretch of rapids perhaps, a few dangerous, troublesome rocks. He found vast whirlpools, and endless vistas of maddened waters, and shoals, shoals, — twenty miles of muscle shoals, three miles wide. Even Push-koosh had cried out in amaze at the phenomenon of the turbulent rapids, declaring that the devils, the *hottuk ookproose*, were dancing under the waters, for he had heard for ten miles the devil's own song that they sung, *tarooa ookpro'sto* (the tune of the accursed one).

As Laroche realized the total impossibility of the undertaking, and saw vanishing all his hopes of distinction in this valid and valuable service, he forthwith sat down on a rock beside the rioting waters, bowed his head on his hands, and cried out to a "*juste ciel*" that this was really too strong, that there was no use in trying to live any longer, and that he was minded to kill himself.

Suicide is always more or less fashionable among Frenchmen. Perhaps the passionate grief of his utterance was not wholly devoid of intention. But as he lifted his dreary eyes, the animated interest and curiosity to see him take his life which the face of Push-koosh expressed effectually deterred him. The spectacle would be too delightfully gratifying to the Choctaw! The humor of the situation appealed to the mercurial French lieutenant, and the pendulum swung back again.

The thought of self-destruction had not recurred to his mind until to-night, when Push-koosh mentioned his bootless threat.

"But why, *mon pauvre Bébé, mon petit chou*, — why should you wish that I had killed myself?" Laroche demanded.

Push-koosh hesitated. He felt that his jealousy was a derogation, and was glad that his hasty words had not

betrayed it to the officer, whom he esteemed a dull, inattentive fellow at best, continually occupied with his little idols, which he carried in a box and would let no one else touch, — his spy-glass, his spirit-level, his quadrant, and his compass, which last he declared knew the north, and without which he could not draw a map, as Push-koosh could on a gourd or a bit of bark or a stretch of clear sand, — he knew little, very little, that French officer, Laroche !

“ *Unta — Illet minte !* ” (Well — Death is coming !) the Choctaw said casually, as if he spoke generally and at random.

“ Not yet ! not yet ! ” cried the officer, remembering the diabolic tumult of the waters. “ Let the devils dance ! I can be merry too ! I have a scheme to outwit them. A great thing, my Baby, to outwit the devils ! ”

Twice he paused to think of it in laying aside his sword and drawing off his coat. Push-koosh made no move toward preparing for slumber. Long after the lieutenant was still, quite still, beneath the delicately dressed and softened panther skins that sufficed for bedding on the elastic cane-wrought mattresses, Push-koosh sat upright on the couch on the opposite side of the room gazing steadfastly at him, — the long, thin figure suggested beneath the folds of the drapery of the primitive bed; the white powdered hair that had lost much of its frosty touches streaming backward, long, loose, the ends slightly curling; the eyes meekly closed; the moonlight in the white, tired, sleeping face, youthful, but grave, pensive, saddened vaguely. That was the way, perhaps, he would have looked had he taken his life as he had threatened. And Push-koosh, still intently eyeing him, wished again that he had.

II

TOWARD dawn the frogs, antiphonally chanting down by the water-side, ceased their chorusing clamors. Now and again a croaking voice sounded raucously alone, — then came silence. The moon was all solitary in the “beloved square,” — not even an errant gust of wind to bear her company. In broad, still, white effulgence the radiance rested unbroken on the sandy stretch and the dark, narrow row of cabins, devoted to public and official business, on each side of the quadrangular space. The more remote dwellings cast shadows wherever the boughs of the overhanging trees left the ground clear. Here too was silence, save in one hut whence issued the voice of a wakeful infant, as boldly bawling as if it were some cherished scion of civilization. Gradually, insensibly, the world took on an aspect of gray dimness. The mountains looming around began to definitely darken. The stars had all grown faint; for the sun would not await the moon’s descent, and presently, driving hard, his chariot was on the steep eastern summits; the song of birds, the trumpet-blast of the wind, the whispering voice of rustling pines, the dash of glancing waters, and human cries of joy and cheer were elicited as if these matutinal sounds partook of the quality of light.

The French officer, dead beat, still slumbered, but Pushkoosh rose, stretched himself, and still arrayed in his splendid ambassadorial attire went out into the freshness of the dawning day and the renewing possibilities of the world. A man who hoped to make naught of dancing devils should have been earlier astir.

There was a scene of activity down at the river bank. The pettiaugre of their expedition, which had been brought to the Muscle Shoals of the Cherokee River laden with powder to aid in the removal of the barriers to free navigation, had been steered with great difficulty and at considerable risk through the rapids, repeatedly grazing the bottom, although it was a much smaller craft of the kind than was usual for the conveyance of freight. Proceeding thence up the stream, it had succeeded in passing safely the "whirl," the "boiling pot,"—known now to modern engineers as the "mountain obstructions,"—and albeit somewhat the worse for the hard wear of its experiment, it had finally reached the smoother waters of the Little Tennessee, and continuing a placid progress along its curves, was coming in to land at the town of Great Tellico.

It was the intention to present the cargo as a token of amity from the French governor to the town of Tellico, such being Laroche's instructions from Kerlerec in case the powder could not be used in the removal of the reefs.

Only a few of the Cherokees were on the bank, and in obedience to their signaled advice, the Choctaws on the pettiaugre had sheered off from the shallows, where a landing had been at first contemplated, and where the craft would have gotten aground at an inconvenient distance from the shore, to seek a deeper haven indicated by the Cherokees, who, as they ran up and down, gesticulated violently in the sign language, and, in lieu of comprehensible, articulate phrases, uttered wild cries, curiously unmusical, like the voice of the dumb.

There on the bank was Eve (her Indian name was Akaluka, which signifies "a whirlwind"). Overpowered with curiosity as to the arrival of the boat, she had repaired to the scene. Being as elaborately appareled as on the preceding evening, it is fair to conclude that the two handsome strangers had not been altogether forgotten. They were

now, however, far from her thoughts. Like a frugal female, she was wholly absorbed in anxiety,—not lest an awkward landing should endanger or submerge many pounds of precious gunpowder, a princely gift from the French government to its secret friend, the important municipality of Great Tellico, especially at that time and in this region, but there were in the cargo sundry trifles originally intended as presents to individuals for the personal propitiation of certain warriors, and she was solicitous as to the fate of one of these gauds. It was a scarf of thin silk, a deep red, with a golden glimmer of broidery, and it had fallen over the gunwale as the Choctaws, no great boatmen at best, awkwardly shifted the cargo in the imminence of the peril of the precious freight. All unheeded, the scarf, escaping from its flimsy wrapping, was now floating away to deck the insensate wave.

Standing on the peak of a high rock, and distinct against the blue sky, like some delineation in white crayon, arrayed in her white, dressed doeskin garb, her white buskins, the white quills in her black hair, she shrieked again and again to the laboring Choctaws, as they wearily trimmed the boat, seeking to acquaint them with their loss, and adjuring the rescue of the property. They heard her, doubtless; but if they understood they did not heed. Their freight of gunpowder, meaning much to the Cherokees of valiant alliance, and even the hope of emancipation from the rule of the hated British, and always to all Indians the equivalent of money, of food, of life itself, rendered infinitely unimportant the gewgaws of the cargo, such as the red scarf so rapidly floating away on the steel-gray water. Flesh and blood could no longer endure the harrowing sight,—at least the flesh and blood of Eve. She suddenly held up both arms above her head, the palms pressed together; she brought them downward in a great, sweeping curve, as she bowed forward, and with an alert spring plunged from the crag into the deep water far below.

Push-koosh noted the resounding splash and held his breath for a moment, so daring the feat seemed to the un-aquatic Choctaw. He watched half skeptically the successive silver circles elastically expanding over the spot where the gray water had closed over her head, as if he scarcely expected to see it rise again. Presently he caught a glimpse of it, very black and glossy still, but far out toward the middle of the river. She was swimming strongly in the silver gray floods and approaching the red scarf, that had now a wanton wind astir in its folds and threw up a curving edge like a sail. She carefully intercepted its course on the current, and holding it aloft out of the water, began to swim with one hand, still strongly and deftly but more slowly, toward the pettiaugre.

Push-koosh's dark, sombrely lustrous eyes followed her with admiration. This method of progression seemed no longer the exercise of frogs. She lifted her head and her body half out of the water as she swam almost under the bow of the pettiaugre, and held the scarf aloft that one of the Choctaw boatmen might take it. The one nearest at hand desisted from his work and looked over the gunwale at her in surprise. Then suddenly he lifted his head, for a sharp halloo came from the bank. He understood the words shouted to him, recognized the authority of Push-koosh, and giving the woman only a shake of his head, by way of refusing to receive the bauble, fell once more to working the boat, and Akaluka, with the rescued scarf still in one hand, was obliged to paddle smartly to keep from being drawn under the pettiaugre by the suction, as the craft once more drove swiftly forward, cleaving the sunlit waves.

There was nothing further for the Cherokee girl but to swim for the bank. She was bewildered, a little startled, full of wonder, for she had just perceived the presence of Push-koosh upon the scene. She laid her course for a

point distant from the rock upon which he had been standing while shouting his command to the boatman to refuse to receive the scarf, but when, still swimming with one arm and holding the delicate fabric out of the water with the other, she came alongside a ledge above a deep, still pool, he was here, waiting for her, and gazing down at her.

She threw her head far back as, all clad in white, she lifted her body half out of the water, and looking up at him held up her arm and offered the scarf.

He made no motion to take it. “*Ook-kak!*” (Swan!) he said. “*Che awalas!*” (I shall marry you!)

He said no more, and walked away instantly. She scrambled out of the deep water and stood on the rock, looking after him for a moment with the scarf still in her hand. Then with it still in her hand she ran home,—ran so fast, that with the wind and the sun and the speed, her hair and garments were almost dry when she reached her house, and but for the trophy there would have been little to confirm the details of this strange event when she recounted it to the man who said afterward, “You must blame the woman!”

Now this personage was one of the “mad young men” of the Cherokee Nation who always craved war,—which, however, seems to be the normal attitude of mind of the young officer even of civilized armies and accounted sane. He perceived propitious signs in the evidently impending proposition of a Choctaw-Cherokee alliance. This combination aided by the French government would indeed be able to strike a crushing blow to the British power in the Indian country. The experiment was obviously to be made. Intermarriages would strengthen the Choctaw-Cherokee bonds of amity. “You love the present,” he said in definite affirmation.

But Eve, ever the woman, tossed her head. Was there

no man in all the Cherokee Nation to marry her, she asked in laughing mockery and coquettish humility, drawing the scarf back and forth through her hands, and looking far more beautiful than her wont with that curious embellishment of beauty which a realization of admiration confers,— no man at all, that she must needs marry a foreign Choctaw who spoke no language that a sensible person could understand, and who lived far away, who could say — indeed, where? — in the moon, perhaps!

Whereupon this mad young warrior, who was of her own kindred, the house of Ahowwe, the Deer family, told her that she spoke as a fool, since she was already committed, for she had taken the Choctaw's present, a sign that she loved it, which was according to inflexible etiquette an acceptance of his suit.

Then she grew grave and a little frightened, and very voluble. She explained that she had had no intention of taking his present, and had kept it only because he would not receive it again, and she had no words that he could understand. But she would not marry a man to whom she could not speak her mind (one of the noblest prerogatives of a wife) and live with him in the moon!

As she said this, she looked upward with her great, dark, liquid eyes to the moon, still white in the western sky, but lace-like, tenuous, a most unsubstantial presentment of a dwelling-place.

The young man of the house of Ahowwe would not follow her wandering gaze as they stood together under a tree in front of her house,— no longer her dead husband's war-pole marked its entrance, the peeled sapling, on the boughs of which the weapons of the warrior were hung until the stake rotted in the ground and fell. The young kinsman was experiencing a sudden and extreme agitation because of her perversity, for if it became necessary to explain the misunderstanding to the Choctaw at this crisis, before the

proposals of the French authorities were made to the headmen of Tellico, it would doubtless greatly anger Mingo Push-koosh, and might frustrate the full disclosure of the measures of his embassy. Essential details might be perverted or entirely withheld in malice or revenge. And thus the French alliance, long sought by both nations, might fall to the ground. It was a complicated train of reflection that he followed, but he said quite simply, and with a cheerful air, that after all it was no great matter. To be sure she should have laid the scarf at the feet of the Choctaw chief, as he did not receive it when offered, to show him that she did not love his present and that his suit was rejected. But it was likely that Mingo Push-koosh had half forgotten it by now; he was of so great esteem in his own country, a prince and a most valiant red warrior! He was even sent to the Cherokee nation by the great French father with a splendid French officer as his interpreter! Such a man as that would not care—he had too much to think of. He himself, her young kinsman, would make it all right. He would see Mingo Push-koosh and return the scarf, and explain that she was only one of those stupid people who did not understand aught, and he would also lie and say that she was shortly to be married to a man who had no war-title and had never taken but a single scalp. Mingo Push-koosh would not care for her after such a description as that!

As he offered to lay hold on the scarf she drew back, shook her head, breathed very fast, and finally burst into tears. Whereupon this wise young man, who was only called "mad," demanded of her in affected surprise why she wasted her tears. Surely she did not want to live in the moon and marry a Choctaw chief, even though he had achieved the distinction of a dozen "warrior's marks" for his prowess in battle! Why did she not give up the scarf? —he, her kinsman, would return it for her, and the great

chief would not care; for he would tell Mingo Push-koosh of a handsomer squaw than she, and younger by four years, more appropriate to make a splendid marriage such as this. Then Eve gave herself to argument, as she always does, and smartly demanded to be told the name of this squaw more beautiful than she, and most pertinently required of him to disclose the reason, since her attractions were so easily eclipsed, that the two strangers, the French officer as well as the Choctaw chief, must always gaze at her in the merrymaking last night,—why did not their eyes seek those younger and more beautiful squaws, as all were present? She declared, moreover, that she would not give her scarf to him. He doubtless desired to make himself fine in it for the horse-races (in fact, it had never been designed as a gift to a mere woman, but as propitiation for some goodly warrior, to rivet his affections to the French interest, and to be worn as a sash, or scarf, or turban, or in any way that his savage fancy for decoration might dictate). As to the scarf, she averred that it was hers, and she would keep it, and she would hear no more of his sharp speeches, which made her heart very heavy. The day was wearing on and her work was awaiting her. So she seated herself on the protruding roots of the great tree in front of her dwelling, giving the final deft touches to a large mat which she had been weaving.

The "mad young man" flung away, secretly satisfied, but with a discontented and affectedly scornful mien, after the manner of his kind, and meeting presently a congenial spirit he paused to detail the demonstration of the Choctaw chief and its reception by the woman. The listener, too, was of the Deer family, and not insensible of the value and distinction of the proposed matrimonial alliance. But he forthwith freely stigmatized the ambassador as a "mad young man" to be thinking of women and marriage in a crucial national crisis such as this. As he contemplated

the political juncture, he could not sufficiently applaud the wisdom of the other's course in preventing the return of the scarf and the consequent affronting of the Choctaw chief, for since the present had been received his suit was accepted according to etiquette. They agreed that she must marry him,—as at heart she was no doubt willing to do, but must needs affect reluctance after the tiresome fashion of women, and talk about living in the moon! And with a scoff at such feminine follies, which they declared made their hearts weigh⁵ very heavy to contemplate, these "mad young men" separated, each going his own way cheerfully,—neither of them being threatened with a doom of living far away, among strangers in a foreign tribe, in a speechless marriage.

As Akaluka sat under the tree and worked at her mat her own heart grew heavier still, and in fact she hardly knew what to make of it. Now and then the realization of the admiration of her suitor brought a curve of pride to her lips, and then her eyes would fill with tears in doubt, and dismay, and anxiety,—all those troubulous vacillations of sentiment which a woman naturally experiences in such circumstances; for she was, perhaps, not the first woman, and certainly not the last, who has accepted a suitor without intending to marry him, and cannot perceive definitely how to recede from an engagement that has become unexpectedly binding.

The man in her thoughts suddenly passed,—the Choctaw chief with the French officer. Both paused as their eyes fell upon her. She was tremulous, perturbed, appealing as she looked up from her lowly posture. A mottling of darkness and sunlight was about the verges of the shadow of the great, wide-spreading tree, but only a dim, green, subdued atmosphere where she sat and in her white attire and with her fishbone needle in her hand wrought an added embellishment of embroidery in the borders of her painted mat.

Both men perceived her agitation. The officer, unaware of the incident of the morning, did not comprehend it. With that suave Gallic civility, always solicitous of the *entente cordiale*, he exclaimed aloud in Cherokee his admiration of the fabric. It was one of those carpets, described as "two fathoms long," woven of the wild hemp, and painted with indelible dyes and designs of the figures of beasts and birds, always the same on both sides. Laroche expressed an interest in the plan of its barbaric decoration and effort at delineation, while Push-koosh stood and silently looked on. Here Laroche traced out a lion (the panther or American cougar), which evidently signified strength, and here were feathers, many and various, so dexterously imitated that he declared they seemed real, which suggested softness, and love, and nesting,—the symbolism was of the guardianship of home,—truly an appropriate mat to lay before a hearthstone! Secure in his interpretation, he looked straight at her with a smile in his handsome brown eyes. She must needs speak in response; yet with Push-koosh loftily looking on she sought by her phrase to include them both as, gazing up, she faltered that she had kept it quite smooth despite its complicated design,—it was quite smooth to walk upon.

It was too pretty to walk upon, the Frenchman declared in facile compliment, and as she drew out the roll flat, to exhibit its smoothness of texture, he dropped on one knee and tried its sleek, evenly wrought fibres with his hand. But Push-koosh, turning away, walked across it with a lordly air like a husband, and as the Frenchman rose from his kneeling posture and joined him, Akaluka looked after them both, with the fishbone needle motionless in her hand, extended to the limit of its hempen thread, and destined to be very idle that day. She was best accustomed to the attitude of mind of the Indian,—and yet the Frenchman, how quick of interpretation he was! — how well he under-

stood all things ! Strange, strange, that there should be such difference in men ! She would not have been afraid to go with him — to the moon.

They conducted themselves at the horse-races that day like other “mad young men ;” they shouted, and bet more than they could afford to lose, and argued much, and talked very loud, and were tumultuously and heavily self-important. But that afternoon, seated in secret conclave on buffalo rugs on the floor of the council-house, with half a dozen chiefs of the towns of the vicinage summoned to join Moy Toy and the headmen of Tellico at the conference, they seemed to have experienced a sudden recurrence to sanity, a lucid interval, and each deported himself much like a man of this world.

These deliberations, although expected to result in a treaty, were not conducted as a formal council, since the will of the Cherokee nation could only be expressed in a general congress, and much consideration must needs precede so important a step as a renunciation of the British alliance and firmly grasping the hand of the great French father. The pipe was solemnly smoked, and although none arose as usual in addressing the assembly, their habitual courtesy to one another in council was observed, each speaking in turn, and punctiliously refraining from interruption. When a subject was mentioned on which the speaker desired a categorical reply from any one present, he handed that person a small stick, at the end of the paragraph as it were, to keep the remark in mind, and then went on to the other heads of his discourse. When he had finished all he had to say, specific responses to the details of his speech were made in turn by those to whom he had handed sticks.

As Moy Toy thoughtfully canvassed the advantages proposed by the French alliance, he remarked that Atta-Kulla-Kulla — a noted chief not present at this time — had always advocated adherence to the British treaty, since the

trade which it provided and protected, albeit a monopoly, afforded the Cherokees a means to keep under arms and adequately supplied with ammunition, which was essential for hunting, and also in view of war; even to enforce against the British with the arms they themselves had supplied the observance of every jot and tittle of the compact with the Cherokees. This advantage the French did not furnish to the Indian tribes under their control.

He paused and solemnly handed a stick to Push-koosh, and then another to Laroche.

It was the fashion, he continued, among the "mad young men" of the nation, to comment upon Atta-Kulla-Kulla's desire to avoid causes of war with the British, calling him "an old woman;" but the great chief was a wise man, for the object of prime importance was to keep the warriors of the tribe under arms in the European fashion, since bows and arrows were of no avail against powder and lead, and on the supply of guns and ammunition actually depended the continuance of the national existence of the Cherokees.

Push-koosh held his stick, attentively listening as Laroche interpreted these words, and in answering said that it was even for such reason the French father furnished the Choctaw tribe fully with arms and ammunition only in times of war against a common enemy — so that, on other occasions, their own "mad young men," caviling thus at the superior wisdom of their elders, might not have the means of embroiling themselves and thrusting nations into hostilities when the great warriors and "beloved men" were all for peace. But for chiefs and headmen the armories of the great French father were always open.

He deftly touched the handsome pistols at his belt with a casual gesture, and hardly seemed to listen to the voice of the French officer repeating his words in Cherokee.

The Indian councilors experienced a tumult of excitement, which their faces, however, stolidly repressed when

Laroche, replying without regard apparently to the presence of the Choctaw, said, as he held his stick in his hand, that it was by no means the intention of the French authorities to ignore the different status of the Cherokees from the tribes under their control. The Cherokees, as the French government well understood, were in effect an absolute integer in the sum of nations, a free, independent, unified people, and they would be armed and equipped in accordance with that fact. Whereas the Choctaws, and Chocomaws, and others were nearly akin to the Chickasaws, all sub-tribes of the Chickemicas of old; and although the Chickasaws, always adhering firmly to the British and inimical to the French, had often warred bitterly against their kindred Choctaws, still in view of ties of consanguinity, similar customs, and above all a common language, a friendly compact between them at some period, while not probable, was eminently possible, especially when promoted by the machinations of the British. Under these circumstances the French father felt indisposed to keep the Choctaws fully under arms while their brothers, the Chickasaws, held the knife at his throat. Surely the great and wise chiefs could perceive a reason for a difference in his attitude toward the Cherokees.

The great and wise chiefs could and did! They were also moved by a recollection that the most notable of the Choctaws, the great chief Shulashummashtabe (Red Shoes), long entertained designs to detach his whole tribe from the interest of the French, being instrumental in their defeat at the battle of Ackia, where he stood aloof with his own command of Choctaw braves while the French troops charged to the cry of "*Vive le roi!*" and afterward he fled in a simulated panic. He later openly deserted to the English, and a reward being offered for his head by the dear French father, he was treacherously slain by one of his own tribe, during the governorship of the Marquis de Vaudreuil.

The Cherokee chiefs in council felt much as if they were treading on mined ground, as they listened to the French officer's voice while he rendered into Choctaw his long speech for the benefit of Push-koosh; for as the ambassador was blandly smiling, they must needs be sure that the interpretation tendered him was to an entirely different effect.

The Indians were so crafty that they seemed to love a device for its own shifty sake. They secretly admired this keen double-dealing of the French authorities, without reflecting that a two-edged blade is made to cut both ways. With a heightened sense of the sagacity of the French officer, they all bent an attentive ear to his account of the obstruction to navigation in the *Rivière des Chéraquis* and his disappointment to find that it was not to be overcome in the manner expected by the French governor Kerlerec, — in fact it was there for all time.

Mingo Push-koosh had been himself disappointed, both as a soldier and a statesman, but his mien had an element of pride as he said that the variegated merchandise — *al-poo-e-ack* — could not be forwarded. Perhaps he resented the fact that he had been forced to discuss the clipped-claw condition of the unarmed Choctaw tribe, whom Kerlerec had nevertheless the art so to propitiate that he was called preëminently the "Father of the Choctaws." Mingo Push-koosh was evidently secretly triumphant in the realization that the French alliance which he possessed so easily, and the Cherokees coveted so strenuously, was not to be had by them; for without the privileges of trade and a base of supply, the Cherokees must adhere to the repugnant treaty with the British to be able to keep under arms at all, even in war with other tribes.

Moy Toy's countenance fell.

"*To e u?*" (Is this true?) he asked sternly, as if he suspected dissimulation, for from time to time there had been traffic more or less by way of the Cherokee River.

“To e u hah!” (It is true indeed!) replied the French officer definitely.

The chiefs looked from one to another silently, their countenances expressing much that their pride would fain have hidden. If this were true, a species of vassalage was the best hope of the free and independent Cherokee people. Laroche begged to be permitted to explain his views in reference to the obstructions to navigation.

Canoes, he went on to say, could pass of course, a few light craft occasionally, perhaps even large pettiaugres at long intervals in some especially favorable stage of the water, but for the free, systematic transportation of the fleets of a great and continuous trade, the passage was forever impracticable. In the distant future the difficulties of navigation might be nullified by the construction of a parallel artificial channel (he could find no Cherokee equivalent for the word “canal”), the method of which he alertly explained with that relish of technical details characteristic of the very young in science,—all as carefully heeded by the Indian statesmen as if entirely comprehensible. But at present he desired to lay before the wise chiefs a plan of his own, which, should it meet their approval, he would elaborate and submit to the governor at New Orleans.

There was an interval of silence as he arranged his thoughts. The anxious, deliberative faces of the chiefs all turned toward him, their eyes keenly studying his expression of countenance, seemed oddly incongruous with the puerile decoration of beads and great earrings, and feathers poised upright on each polled head. The vague light of the smouldering council-fire flickered upon them; the sombre interior of the windowless building was but dimly glimpsed in the deep red glow; the glare from the brilliant day outside filled the narrow portal as with some transparency, some illuminated segment of a painted landscape unnaturally bright,—an emerald mountain aglow, a silver

shimmering river, a bit of sapphire sky, intense. Voices, faint in the distance, of jovial intimations, came from where the young people were dancing in three circles after the races and the feastings. The sound was far alien to this atmosphere of thought and anxious care, this dim council-house, where were concocted the measures of statecraft that kept the people free and happy. Even Push-koosh, whom the envious shadows could not bereave of the brilliant effect of his white raiment, asserted albeit in the dimness, his glossy pearls, the glitter of his silver ornaments, did not heed the joyous clamor. As to Laroche, he did not hear it at all.

It was not to be contemplated, he said, that this perverse obstruction to navigation should withhold the Cherokee nation from firmly grasping the hand of the French father who loved them; but since it was absolutely impracticable to send valuable cargoes of arms and ammunition, as well as cloths, cutlery, tools, and paints, all those necessities of the Indian trade, so expensive and difficult to be obtained, through those twenty miles of roaring rapids, to say nothing of the whirlpools further up the current, the merchandise might be thence transferred, under strong guard, by land with pack-horses to the comparatively near point of the reopening of easy navigation, were there a barrier town settled at each extremity of the overland route to receive and distribute the goods by the various waterways throughout the Cherokee nation.

“ *Seohsta-quo!* ” (Good !) cried Moy Toy of Tellico.

The others in great excitement but in definite order, observing their usual courtesy in deliberation, with much rapid bestowal of sticks, bespeaking categorical answers on the various details, began the discussion of this bold project,—the extension of their settlements for more than a hundred miles rather than fail to secure the advantage of the French alliance. The details of the diplomatic scheme illustrated the Frenchman’s fertility in device, and Push-koosh was not

slow to perceive that Laroche presently had both hands full of sticks, while he himself held but two, evidently tendered only as an afterthought and *pro forma*. The Indian statesmen wished to hear the French officer speak. The coherence and cogency of his plan commended it. Indeed, afterward they contemplated the removal of the town of Tellico Great itself, one of the "seven Mother Towns" of the Cherokee nation, far enough down the Cherokee River to be within easy access of the large French pettiaugres. Even as it was, the nation subsequently extended its frontier on this basis, and a series of new towns was settled below the "mountain obstructions," the "whirl," the "boiling pot," and still beyond, near the upper end of the Muscle Shoals, serving as the "barrier towns" of the tribe. The Cherokees craftily explained to the English the necessity for this move by the statement that the site of some of their upper towns had become infested with witches! — it may safely be presumed that they were British witches!

The questions relative to the proposed new location, — the number of warriors requisite for the barrier towns; the possibility that, if supported by a sufficient force of braves in the neighborhood, the French government would settle a garrison at the Muscle Shoals; the number of horses and men necessary for the pack-trains and the guard for the overland transportation; the most desirable point for the resumption of the water carriage of the merchandise up the Cherokee River, and thence by way of the Eupharsee (Hiwassee), the Tennessee, the Agiqué (French Broad), throughout the Cherokee country; the measures to be taken for the protection of French traders and their mercantile assistants against the British, — all these points Laroche intelligently discussed, continually receiving and returning sticks, while the transparent landscape in the doorway shimmered to a change: the blue sky grew red, the green mountain turned purple, the silver river dulled to steel, and a star began to flicker in the west.

Moy Toy would have talked on through the descending darkness, regardless of the night and the dying of the last ember of the council-fire, save for the admonition of one of the minor chiefs, on whom the duty of caring for the creature comforts of the guests had devolved, and who contrived to intimate presently that it was long since the strangers had eaten and drunk. On this account the council was adjourned, Moy Toy still wearing a thoughtful aspect and meditatively saying, "We will talk of this again to-morrow." And as they left him in the gloom of the state-house, and began the descent of the steps of earth that led down from the high mound, they heard him still mechanically repeating in the solitary darkness, "We will talk of this again to-morrow."

Now Push-koosh, like some other infants, even when not Choctaw chiefs nor warriors, was of a proud, implacable, and pompous self-opinion. It required little to wound his vanity and nettle his temper, but indeed he had ample cause for affront in that this officer had talked unceasingly in his presence to the Cherokee chiefs without pausing to translate what was said, although in their excitement no one had noticed the fact. At first Push-koosh had essayed to speak in Cherokee, but his knowledge of the tongue would not sustain the subtleties of his meaning. He had even humbled himself once to seek recourse in the sign language, comprehensive enough for all needs, but every eye was fixed upon Laroche, every ear intent. He felt his pride touched that this absorbing interest, which the chiefs had manifested in diplomatic matters, sprang from naught that he had disclosed in his ambassadorial capacity,—in fact he did not even know the subject of their excitement or its importance. He thought it derogatory to his position to inquire of Laroche, or to seem to realize that he had been overlooked—he, the head of the embassy! But the incident roused him to the assertion of his own importance.

He saw, with pleasure in the contrast, that Laroche was exhausted by the mental stress of the discussion, while he had been refreshed by the long hours of rest in the quiet seclusion of the state-house. When they were seated in one of the piazza-like cabins at one side of the "beloved square," where the banquet had been spread after the races, Laroche was still absorbed and silent, ate little, and drank only of the decoction from the "flint corn" made by boiling the grain and straining the result, the beverage when cooled said to have been refreshing and nutritive and "much liked even by genteel strangers." A fire was alight in the centre of the "beloved square," but the other public buildings were all vacant, and their open piazza-like fronts showed dark and deserted in the deepening dusk. The festivities were over for the nonce; the Indian guests from the neighboring villages had departed; the strangers' share of the evening banquet, with which the merrymaking in their honor had ended, having been reserved for them till the close of the protracted session of the council. The town seemed drowsy, already half asleep; only a few occasional passers set the echo of a footfall astir; an owl was hooting in the woods; a vague sense of dreariness had descended with the twilight, and suddenly Laroche became cognizant, with a start as if he had seen a ghost, that there was a presence at the meal of which he had been hitherto unaware, — Akaluka herself, meekly seated by the Choctaw chief while he silently ate and drank.

There was a bold, open triumph in the face of Push-koosh, as he noted the manifestation of surprise. He looked at the French officer as arrogantly as if he had already that luxuriant Gallic scalp hanging to his favorite pipe. Perhaps he himself had never seemed so assertive, so lordly, as in the blended light of the bland moonrise and a flickering pine torch with which the table was lighted by the old woman who served it, — his strings of pearls, his

glittering pistols, his white and scarlet garb, the red flamingo feathers in his hair, the broad silver band across his forehead, his perfect physical condition ; while Laroche, pale from mental exertion, the mathematical calculation, the evolution of plans of public polity, the arrangement of intricate and antagonistic details in the problems of the Indian trade, wiped his forehead, felt his eyes ache, and was too tired to eat.

These plans were the more precious since they were suddenly beset with a new danger ; he realized the menace, although he did not appreciate that he himself was an element in it ; he did not know how admiringly the girl had gazed at him the previous evening at the pantomime, while Push-koosh, who could have killed him for it, gazed at her. Even Push-koosh had noted his unconsciousness of this fact, — but Laroche had not been equally oblivious of her attractions. “ *Eho chookoma !* ” quotha. She might now gaze at her peril, — and so might he ! Laroche had not noticed this evening the Choctaw as he beckoned the girl to sit beside him as he ate, but he knew enough of Indian etiquette to be aware that this is the method by which the suitor formally recognizes and emphasizes the fact that his addresses are accepted.

Laroche had learned that this woman was the sister of Moy Toy, and while a Choctaw match for her might be approved by him as a means of strengthening the alliance between the tribes, still there was of necessity great doubt as to the completion of this national compact, the Choctaws and Cherokees having many ancient enmities to reconcile, and the offer of intermarriage must needs be approached with precaution. And above all things at some future day ! To hamper at this crisis so important and promising a negotiation between the French government and the Cherokee nation, so difficult of arrangement, with a nettling trifle like this, — a personal matter of so alien and doubtful a character, — Laroche trembled with impatience at the very thought.

He was once more all alert. When Push-koosh rose at last from the meal and flung casually away, taking his path along the river bank where a cool breeze was stirring, the lieutenant followed. For although the woman must sit beside her suitor when he eats if he beckons to her, still the match is not yet irretrievably made. He must needs give her the foot of a deer as an admonition how brisk she must be on his errands, whereupon she must bake and offer him a cake of rockahominy meal, as token of willing subservience. He must also break an ear of corn in half, and in the presence of witnesses give her one portion, retaining the other himself, which completes the symbolic Indian marriage ceremonies.

“Push-koosh,” said Laroche gravely, as he approached, — the Indian slackened his pace, welcoming from his position of vantage as an accepted suitor the prospect of a quarrel with a jealous lover, — “the commandant did not send us here to make love to women !”

Push-koosh turned to glance aside at him. “Take care that you don’t do it, then,” he admonished the officer.

“Our mission is a matter far too important to jeopardize with such considerations,” declared Laroche. He slipped his arm through the Choctaw’s in a friendly way and detailed at length his scheme, his clever scheme, apologizing that he had not interpreted it at the council. “But it was not a part of our instructions, — only a plan of my own.”

“You did not want my suggestions, — I do not want yours,” retorted Push-koosh, deeply angered to perceive the importance of the discussion, through which he had sat silent, carried on over his head.

“But you can see surely that there must be no talk of women and marriage till all this is settled, — wait till you come again,” urged Laroche, holding his temper well in hand.

“*Eho chookoma !*” quoted Push-koosh significantly. “Meantime there might be another man !”

That fatal "other man" — was ever a lover's dream which he did not haunt ?

"But, *Bébé*, Push-koosh," argued the Frenchman suavely, "what would you do hampered with a Cherokee wife if, after all, this tribe continues to adhere to the British, and should take part in their war with the French and their Choctaw allies ?"

Push-koosh, animated with the jealous conviction, yet full of triumph in the fact, that the French officer was himself in love with this charming swan and therefore sought to interpose obstacles, retorted as if to strike him to the heart, "Do ? — comply with the tribal custom ! *Kill her !* In the last war with the Muscogee, did not the Choctaw braves who had married Muscogee wives kill the women and their children, they being also Muscogee, for the children inherit the nationality of the mother ? I should, of course, kill her ! "

He had turned to face the officer, who stood for one moment speechless, realizing the strange world in which he was living, the curious medley of devil and man, of savagery and civilization.

The moon was well up over the river, and where the light struck with full effulgence the water was all a shining violet hue ; the banks were of an invisible green, too dark for color, but somehow still sensibly verdant. All along the shore the frogs were piping, hardly noticed ; for in the budding rhododendron close at hand a mocking-bird sang with wonderful *élan* and elasticity, the multitude of exquisitely sweet notes springing one from another with a definite effect of rebound.

"Push-koosh," the lieutenant said at length, "*mon Bébé bien-aimé*, you always betray your tender infant heart ! "

He seemed to laugh, but his hand trembled on the hilt of his sword, as he stood as if irresolute and gazed at Push-koosh with a threat in his intent eyes hardly less fierce

than the look with which only last night Push-koosh had menacingly, nay murderously gazed at him while he slept. Suddenly the officer turned aside, and alone took his way back to the Indian town.

Yet Laroche did not love the woman. Perhaps he was merely civilized by virtue of his nationality and his religion ; for although as a soldier he would have coolly taken the life of a man and an enemy, he felt all a coward in the secret danger that menaced the Cherokee girl, unaware, doubtless, of her peril. He himself was not unaware of it, and therein he perceived an irksome responsibility. The Cherokees were so far in advance of the other Indian tribes in point of character, sentiment, civilization, that Laroche doubted if this mode of ridding one's self of a wife, who, through no fault of her own, but for political reasons, had incurred disfavor, would suggest itself to them more readily than it had to him. With their evident intention to accept the proffer of the French alliance, it was more than likely that the Cherokee authorities, with their characteristic lack of foresight, would treat the match with the Choctaw chief as if the compact with the French were already made fast. Yet should it fail,— and from Laroche's post on the seamy side he saw many a rent in the web of the probabilities,— Push-koosh had said it,— he had decreed her fate.

Laroche had so longed for the success of his scheme ! It was so great, so clever, so promissory of personal and professional advancement ! He felt that he would hardly hazard an item of its development for his own life,— much less then for the life of a creature like this — hardly more human than a deer ! Besides, why should he interfere ?— all might yet go well with the alliance. When he began to argue thus, he suddenly stopped short. Would he weigh a human life in the balance of his personal interest — become, albeit indirectly, accessory to a murder of the innocent ? He grew a trifle pale at the thought and devoutly

crossed himself. He would assume no such responsibility. He would keep no such secret. And then he began to see the matter in the light of an official duty. He represented the French interest, and should the Cherokees ever learn that he had been cognizant of this threat and had withheld it from them, it would alienate them, as naught else could, from the power that so earnestly sought their conciliation. In every point of view he determined that he would not hesitate. He would lay the matter before Moy Toy, as in civilization he would instantly report a threatened murder to the police.

Now Moy Toy was a man of family affection. Years earlier, in 1730, he had given indications of this fact when a Cherokee delegation, favored by royal invitation, were on the point of setting forth to visit King George II. in London; Moy Toy, although he was to be the chief delegate, at the last moment relinquished the distinguished opportunity because his wife had fallen dangerously ill and he could not leave her. Therefore he remained at the little Indian village, while several other chiefs made the wonderful journey to England, and had audience of the sovereign at his palace, and were the recipients of innumerable presents and attentions, being the lions of the day.

He now took instant alarm at this menace to his sister, and to Laroche's surprise presently summoned to his aid and counsel the other chiefs of Tellico Great. The Indian scheme of succession follows the collateral female line, and therefore Moy Toy's possible future nephew would inherit his office as chief of Tellico Great, to the exclusion of his own son. Hence his sister was a personage of as much consequence in Tellico Great as a mere woman could be, and the council agreed that in view of this circumstance they would not trust the Franco-Choctaw-Cherokee alliance until it was an accomplished fact. Yet even now it was in jeopardy, for Mingo Push-koosh, the French ambassador,

bearing also the assurances of the Choctaw nation, angered with so good a reason might work mischief. And then began the accusation of the woman!

Why had she kept his present, and involved them in all this difficulty? the sage councilors assembled in the state-house demanded of her when summoned before them. For this very reason, she declared, had she kept his present, although not loving it, for the young men had said that she must not on any account anger the Choctaw ambassador of the great French father. Then poor Moy Toy, roused from cogitation on such deep and intricate problems as had occupied the day, to fill the dark hours of the night with vacillations and agitations touching the political effects of so ill-starred a flirtation, asked her bitterly had she no more sense than to listen to the "mad young men!" Whereupon she protested with tears that the "mad young men" had but spoken the words that even now were on his own sage lips, — the ambassador must not be angered!

With daylight came new resolutions. Moy Toy, arguing that the ambassador was not empowered to treat for a Cherokee wife, and to exact compliance with his demand as a condition of his mission, concluded that he sustained no official affront in the ceremonious return of the scarf with an intimation that so great and flattering an intermarriage could only be made after the compact with the two tribes.

Now it is possible that Push-koosh might have acquiesced with appropriate docility in this obviously just reasoning of his elders, requiring, however, promises of Moy Toy on his sister's behalf, conditioned on the completion of the tribal compact, had it not been for his jealousy of the French lieutenant. Akaluka, again summoned, was also at the state-house, wild-eyed, tremulous, visibly terrified, eager to return the present, which, having been made acquainted with her possible fate, she was far indeed from loving.

As the Choctaw ambassador received the scarf which she

tendered him, the cogent reasons for delay that had been urged, the political interests involved, so prominent in the apologies of the Cherokee chiefs,—all were merged in a sense of sustaining the curious disgrace of a personal and public rejection in the presence of a rival,—for Mingo Push-koosh caught the eyes of the French lieutenant fixed hopefully upon him.

Why then, the Choctaw asked quite calmly, had she received the present if she did not love it? Why had she sat beside him as he ate? For himself,—neither did he love the present!

He held up the gauzy red scarf and with sundry swift passes of a scalp knife severed the fabric into dozens of shreds, sent lightly flying about the state-house like a flock of red-birds. Then whirling on his heel, he quitted the council-chamber and followed by all his tribesmen ran across the “beloved square” to the river bank, where the *pettiaugre* lay defenseless at his mercy. All the kegs of the precious powder were emptied into the stream before his design was dreamed of, and still he deemed he had sufficient margin for a running start from the pursuit he expected, for he paused in the woods to hang up the “war-brand.” This being, however, in a secluded place, it was not early discovered, and the first intimation that the Cherokees received of the depth of his resentment was the massacre almost to a man of a peaceful party of their tribesmen, offering no resistance, taken wholly by surprise, owing to the pacific character of the Franco-Choctaw mission to Great Tellico. This exploit achieved, Mingo Push-koosh and his escort, adorned with scalps and singing war-songs, made good their escape, with the wonderful Choctaw speed in marching, leaving the deserted Laroche alone and at the mercy of the frantic and infuriated Cherokees.

III

LAROCHE, abandoned thus among the Cherokees, was in the extremity of peril. Apart from their spirit of tribal cohesion, the strongest of national sentiments, all those more intimate ties of family affection, of municipal unity, and of neighborly custom, in which they were peculiarly bound, were insistently asserted in the calamity, as the massacred braves were all of Tellico Great. When the gory figures of the unarmed, unpainted youths, still limp and warm, not yet stiffened into the starkness of death, were borne into the precincts of the town, the wailing of the women and children, and the hoarse cries of fury and despair and grief of the men, filled all the bland, sunlit spaces of the morning, and were a heavy burden to the air.

It was with no definite sense of the wisest course that Laroche had not moved from the portal of the great state-house whence he had beheld Mingo Push-koosh, followed by all his braves, rush across the "beloved square" to the pet-tiaugre and accomplish the destruction of the powder. He was stunned, bewildered, as by the fall of a thunderbolt. Only afterward he realized that he had no choice. The craft still lay at her moorings, but his single strength could not have sufficed to float her, even if in the confusion he had escaped. He had a shrewd surmise of the secret source of the wrath of the Mingo, and he doubted if the jealousy of the Choctaw, once unleashed and dipped in blood, were less formidable than the wild frenzy of the Cherokees. Moreover, at their freest pace, speeding for their lives, he knew that he could never have sustained the gait of the

marching Choctaws, and must eventually have fallen by the wayside or lagged to certain capture.

He began to appreciate, as he stood, an aspect in the accident of his posture which his craft recognized as savoring of more wisdom than he could have attained by his own mental processes. His isolation implied that he was no accessory to the crimes in which the mission had terminated. The desertion of him by the Choctaws augured scant value of his functions in the embassy, and still less friendship for him personally, — his safety, indeed, they disregarded. He began to hope preposterously, as his heart swung into more normal palpitations, that his nationality, his secret mission within the Franco-Choctaw mission, his obvious freedom from any conspiracy with the Indian ambassador who had so conspicuously abused his trust, might serve to protect him.

Then he perceived suddenly that he was arguing from the probabilities on a civilized system of ratiocination. For himself, he did not love the spectacle of suffering nor the smell of blood, albeit so skilled in the designing of lines of *tenailles* and *en crémaillère*, in which men were to lay down their lives in much agony. His own development of barbarity was on a different basis and had a vocabulary quite distinct and scientific, his jargon of *trou-de-loup* and *cheval-de-frise* and *chausse-trappe*; and he watched with a very definite sentiment of reprobation and mental disapproval, as well as a deep and numb despair, the approach of a half dozen fierce, lowering-eyed braves, full-armed, who stood for a moment looking up at him and then seated themselves, obviously to remain, at the base of the mound, assuming the functions of a permanent guard.

In fact, Laroche had been unobserved at first in the clamors and confusion of the disaster, the departure of the horsemen on the heels of the flying Choctaw pedestrians, the ghastly return of the young Indians of the massacre, who

had gone forth with all the imponderable lightness of life and joy in the morning and now were brought back in weight with death and woe. The first vague suggestion of the alleviation of the public calamity came with the stern thought of vengeance and its opportunity. In that moment the eye of one of the headmen chanced to be lifted to Laroche. The guard was dispatched in an instant, and whatever might have been the issue of an effort to escape, the possibility was now gone forever. He began to perceive that they would take no thought of an absence of conspiracy. He was one of the embassy — its accredited interpreter ; he was also a Frenchman, and the Cherokees were still in open alliance with the British. Moreover, he was in their power, and *blood for blood* was ever the Cherokee rule.

For a time he made no effort to appeal to his guards, even by a glance or a gesture. Hour after hour passed away. He heard the vague sounds, in the distance, of the chanting of the funeral songs ; he perceived, undistinguished, colorless, meaningless, like shadows through a dark glass, the passing of the funeral processions here and there around the houses of the dead. Again and again there smote on the air wild outbursts of the protesting woe of the mourning, the note of incredulity, the appeal against injustice, and that pathetic plaint of a heart all bruised and tender — and yet in a sense he heard naught. He was conscious of a degree of quietude when the actual details of the interment were in progress within the houses, for with the Cherokees the dead were always buried deep, deep under the floor of their own homes, and a sense of extreme fatigue ached in his muscles. He realized how long he had maintained a standing posture there without a motion — a sentinel who habitually mounted guard his eight hours out of the twenty-four would hardly have been capable of such resolution. As his eye met that of one of the guards, he saw in the inexpressive face of the Indian a sort of appre-

ciation of his strength of will that coerced the endurance of the flesh, and at last he spoke:—

“Moy Toy cannot think me to blame—why does he guard me here?”

They all gazed at him with a sort of concentrated fury. The racial hatred against the white man—ineradicable, unappeasable, now and again only pretermitted for a time in favor of some special individual—showed in their strongly marked, savage features, with the primitive passions of the rule of force and the thirst for revenge painted upon them in a breadth of expression that pigments could not emulate.

“Blood for blood,” one of them said, and spat upon the ground.

“If I were one of the Choctaws—yes! But I am French. I have done naught. They have deserted me. I am entrapped here. It would please them that you should shed my blood.”

There was a momentary silence under this logic. Then another of the Indians, always of a far greater intellectual pride than might be readily imagined, and keen and quick in argument, came to the spokesman’s rescue. He was the man whose eyes had applauded the prisoner’s endurance—a mere tribesman, of the rank and file only; he had a broad, animated countenance, a high, aquiline nose, a long, upper lip, and a distinct accentuation of the lines of his features. He wore the scanty raiment of the lower grades of the Indian, but the careful and elaborate tattooing of blue, red, and green indelible paints disposed about his limbs, in which he must have spent much arduous labor, had almost the effect of long and elaborately embroidered hose and gloves. He had a shirt of buckskin, devoid of beads or ornaments, save a fringe about its edge, but which seemed remarkably plain in contrast with the decorations of his arms and legs. He leaned upon a gun of very doubtful intentions, unlike the smart, British “Brown Bess,” with

which the tribe, however, was generally armed. With a vivacious air, he demanded of the Frenchman if he had forgotten "Ablaham" so soon.

"Abraham?" said Laroche vaguely.

"The white man's poor memory! It was his treaty he forgot, usually, but now he had forgotten too his religion. He had forgot Ablaham — the great white chief whom he was telling Moy Toy about yesterday!"

Laroche remembered, with a pang as for a folly, an effort at the conversion of the ignorant savage. Yesterday — only yesterday! — he had sought to explain to Moy Toy the plan of salvation and to enlist his interest. He laughed aloud in bitter mirth — a short, hollow note, and then must come contrition and a mutter of prayer. Abraham and Isaac — how far away they seemed!

"But, my friend," he said, "the injunction to shed innocent blood was for a purpose — to test the faith of the great chief; and the blood of the innocent was not exacted. I have done nothing. I only am deserted, caught here as in a trap."

"Likewise was the ram whose blood was shed," declared the specious Indian, his eyes flashing fire, — "caught as in a trap by the horns in a thicket. And the ram had done nothing."

The Frenchman was fairly silenced; the others, hardly comprehending the discourse, not having burdened their minds with Abraham and his experiences, conceiving him to be an Indian agent, or in some other position near the governor of Louisiana, Georgia, or South Carolina, only discerned from the facial expression of the two men that the Cherokee's keen wits had come off victorious in the encounter, and despite their gloom, they made shift to smile at each other in ostentatious amusement, and in derision of the purblind white man.

Laroche's anxiety and apprehension were hardly assuaged

by the recollection of the blood-offerings among the religious observances of the Cherokees, intimately connected with their system of government and warfare, which had recalled strongly to his mind associations with the Mosaic dispensation. Many minute requirements and ceremonies savored of the Hebraic ritual, and in their distortions had impressed him as survivals of actual customs, and were thus more significant than the legends found among the tribes betokening Scriptural suggestions and supposed to be the result, *disjecta membra*, of the teachings and traditions of Catholic truths which Cabeza de Vaca left among the Southern Indians.

Laroche sought to compose his mind. He was a soldier, and would muster all a soldier's courage,—a Christian, whose hope was in no help of man. He would calm himself and await the worst or the best, as God should choose to send it, with the serenity of one whose life is, after all, not his own. As he stood there in the wide glare of the sun, it seemed to have grown speedily and strangely very hot. His eyes were on the mountains far away, that through the silvery, vernal mists, forever shifting, belied their stanch and massive solidities by a shimmer like some wavering, blue sea; not a breath of air was in the deep, green shadows of the darkling ranges close at hand; the river, a wide blade of steel without flaw, bore the polish of a mirror and a blinding glitter. Suddenly a cold chill struck through him. At first it crept along his spinal column, slight, insidious, vaguely shivering; then in its icy thrall he shuddered again and again; the drops that fell from his brow upon his hands were ice cold, and as he looked down, wondering, at his long, thin fingers he saw that they were blue under the nails to the first joint. Some change in his face had attracted the attention of the Indians. They were all gazing up at him in surprise, as shudder after shudder went over his features, pallid even to blueness. He instinctively put up his hand

to his brow, and he found that even to his cold fingers its touch was like marble. He was obviously very near death, done with the world and with worldly pride, but he was still a soldier, and his pulses beat to a martial point of honor. He could have died with shame, albeit the spectators were but savages ; for he thought this manifestation purported the subjection of fear, and that thus the staring Indians recognized it.

Averse as they were, they accounted him no coward. In truth, his stanch, compact physique and his bold spirit promised good sport at the torture, and they had discussed with one another from time to time the various details of the anguish which his strength and courage would enable him to sustain, and which sometimes weaker and fainter hearted men eluded and despoiled by dying prematurely. They could hardly explain the change in his complexion and expression of countenance, and only wondered while they looked, and presently it passed away, leaving the flesh of a ghastly, uniform pallor, flabby and listless.

But Laroche had hardly recovered his normal temperature. He was suddenly weak and tremulous. He could no longer sustain the standing posture. In another moment he would have fallen. With his winning affability and gay grace, that became his ghastly, stricken face as a wreath of flowers might a death's head, he remarked that since they were all sitting he would take the liberty of sitting too, and ran down two or three of the grassy steps of the mound and there dropped upon the turf, half reclining, one elbow on the step above him, supporting his head in his hand, and with his limbs stretched out at length across the stairs below. The Indian guard at the foot of the mound did not stir, save that the acquaintance of "Ablaham" placed a finger ostentatiously on the trigger of his loaded gun. Laroche looked at him with a laughing sneer that taunted him to do his worst. The slug of the charge

would have been too merciful.⁶ There was no intention in the threat, and the Indian laughed like a roguish child detected in a bit of mischief.

The sky was reddening at last and Laroche, looking over to the far west, felt as if that incarnadined glow in the heavens was rising in his veins as the sun went down. It was not the red reflection on his face, but the blood mustering close under the skin when he again changed color. He felt it racing and rushing through his veins, ever quickening, ever wilder.

His mood changed. He had been saying to himself that it was no matter when or how painfully he died. He wished that he might see a priest — the good Père François; he caught himself hastily, remembering that piteous death of the father. Alas, when and how painfully have died many, many of the Order of Jesus, here, there, in every clime! He said to himself that he should be proud that it fell to his lot to emulate the mortuary example of those undying missionaries, that yet in the flesh died so hardily.

“Quibus dignus non erat mundus!” he declared in swelling phrase, *ore rotundo*.

But with the sudden surging of his fevered blood he protested. They, — God knew he wished to detract no whit from their credit, — but they were spiritual-minded men, many convent-bred, ascetic, he had almost said superstitious, solicitous for the martyr’s crown, with a talent for dying, and a positive genius for remitting to everlasting opprobrium throughout all the ages their misguided murderers.

He broke off from these reflections with a sudden, loud, hilarious laugh that echoed far through the quiet town on whose death-stricken ways the dusk was gradually descending, and brought his Indian guard to their feet with an abrupt spring, staring at him with vague wonder through the gloom.

His eyes, meeting theirs, were large, dilated, curiously

bright. There seemed no recognition in them. He did not answer when they spoke, but shifting his posture slightly went on muttering to himself; his mind thus beyond the control of his will, he formulated more candor than his disciplined judgment was wont to recognize. They were spiritual-minded men, he reiterated, the Jesuit martyrs. For himself,— he was a soldier, not a martyr. Dying was the last thing a soldier should do,— and once more his foolish, frivolous laugh rang through the melancholy glooms of the bereaved town. He was not fitted to die thus,— the prey of unreasoning devils called by complaisance savages, to whom he had been sent on a mission of importance to French politics. His grave, his honorable grave, awaited him on some stricken field of battle. He had thought a hundred times how it might come,— in the rebuilding of some destroyed bridge which the enemy— *peste!* he always destroys the good bridges! — or perhaps in pushing a parallel closer and closer to the lines of the doomed defenses,— a ball from the *chemin couvert* of the fort might find a vital spot. Would he shun it? — fear death? — “*Je te fais mes compliments!*” He stood suddenly erect and saluted. Then he collapsed upon the ground. A soldier’s hasty grave on the field of battle,— he coveted it. For shrift,— the pressure of a good comrade’s hand might bid him Godspeed. A soldier has few sins to confess. Little is required of him — he is merely a soldier — all body and heart — a mere bit of a soul! But these priests — these spiritual men — they who can profess so much, why should they fail?

A light was presently glimmering in the dusk, — clear, luminous, a pyramidal flare approaching rapidly, then pausing as in uncertainty, flickering through the blue darkness, and once more drawing near.

“The lanthorns of the burial parties,” he said, contemplating with a gentle melancholy the battlefield of his fancy.

"Many a fine fellow coming to-day that must be carried to-morrow."

Then swiftly repeating a series of measurements and mathematical calculations, he rose as the light paused at the foot of the mound and the flare of the torch fell upon the face of Moy Toy, summoned hither by the weird sound of that strange, hilarious laughter, and minded to advance the hour for the prisoner's torture and death, since he must needs be so obtrusively merry in the face of their distresses and disasters.

Laroche recognized him vaguely, but naught of the circumstances which environed him. He lifted his voice as he pursued his train of remarks, expressing the jumble of his ideas.

"Un bastion, Moy Toy, avec un ravelin, — et une fraise d'épine ne serait pas inutile ! — là, — là, — sur le bord de la rivière, — quatre-vingts toises de distance, — pour enfiler les colonnes, — la fosse, — à la portée du canon, — donnez dix-huit pieds de large au parapet, — et puis, — et puis," —

He ran down the steps and laid his hot hand upon the arm of the Cherokee chief, who stared aghast at this manifestation of a strange distemper.

It was well for Laroche that the Cherokees did not feel it incumbent upon them to preserve the grace of consistency. If he had continued in health, he would assuredly have been put to death with tortures, in satisfaction of the iniquities of the embassy of which he was a member, but his wandering mind, his evident delirium, precluded his knowledge of his own fate, and thus robbed the torture of its choicest delight, the fear and mental misery of the victim, as well as his bodily agony. A postponement of the sentence was hastily agreed upon, and the patient, still declaiming upon the advantage of one system of fortification and contemptuously disparaging others, was gently conveyed, for he could no longer walk, to the stranger-house which he

and Push-koosh had occupied, put to bed on the elastic cane-wrought mattress, and the medicine-men were summoned to exorcise this strange demon of fever which had possessed the guest.

The skill of these primitive people in the art of healing was said to be very considerable. But in this instance the Cherokee physicians found themselves at a loss. La-roche had duly absorbed the atmospheric miasma of the swampy country near Mobile and New Orleans, which, had he remained there, might have occasioned no trouble. But upon his sudden removal it instantly manifested itself in a virulent type of malarial fever, all its poison elicited by the pure, clear air of this mountain region. Hence this salubrious clime has been called "the unhealthiest country in the world" by suffering subtropical wights who would not be at rest at home and could not be well elsewhere. This theory, exploited long since those times, was not familiar to the two cheerataghe, who rattled their calabashes at the fever demon with hearty good will. They administered the varied decoctions of herbs famous as febrifuges. They repeated aloud their ancient incantations, both mandatory and contemptuous, bidding the malign spirit depart. They arrayed and painted themselves in frightful guise to terrify the fever demon, and decorated with buffalo horns and buffalo tails, they rushed roaring from right to left in front of the bed, and when this proved futile, from left to right. They subjected the patient to sudden immersion in hot water, and then in cold, and again to a steaming process, placing him in an oven-like structure of heated rocks, over which water was poured, — all without avail. The Cherokee magicians began to look very grave and ill at ease, for a dark cloud was ominously gathering on the brow of Moy Toy. All at once Moy Toy had come to covet the life of this man. It must be captured from death. He must be snatched from the already open grave. Not for the satis-

faction of exacting that terrible penalty, as one of the treacherous Choctaw embassy; not for the keen delight of the spectacle of his death by torture. Any unlucky French wight captured from the Illinois country; or some helpless English body, unknown or of scant note, wandering away from a kindly colonial settlement and heard of never again; or even a stanch Indian of one of the inimical tribes, — Muscogee, Tuscarora, Séneca, — any mere man, in short, who had blood to spill, and bones to break, and nerves to writhe might furnish this sport. With this man's death more was lost, — a subtle, keen brain, technical military knowledge, practical military experience, a tongue of wondrous craft trained in various speech, a secret cogent influence with the French authorities at New Orleans, — all calculated to subserve the Cherokees, and this a trifling kindness would reinforce by the claims of gratitude, a claim paramount in the Indian scheme of ethics.

So overwhelmed had been the wary Moy Toy's brain by the surprise, the fury, the grief attending the catastrophe of the massacre of his young tribesmen, that these considerations were not even dimly presented to his alert perceptions till the moment that Laroche dashed down the stairs of the mound and impetuously flung himself into his host's arms with his delirious babble of military works and munitions of war. It was at first but a vague impression, a doubtful suggestion. The crafty Indian mind dwelt upon it in the days that came and went. Time seemed to embellish, to perfect it. And now it had become the dearest boon of fate, and the Indian could not, would not forego it. For this man could design and build a fort that could withstand a British assault! He could so dispose the Indian facilities as to enable them to defend it. He could by reason of his connection with the French government secure such munitions of war as would complete its armament. An impregnable stronghold in the wilderness, with scientific-

ally handled artillery, could set at naught British aggression and hold the country.

Turned in whatever light, the idea presented a perfect symmetry. It was like a many faceted gem. And thus the two magicians, men of herbs and simples, found their equanimity shaken and their capacities seriously hampered by the continual presentation of Moy Toy's imperious countenance at the door of the stranger-house, and the sight of his agitation and anger that the cheerataghe had failed to exorcise the demon of fever and work a cure. Therefore they besought him to leave the sufferer to their ministrations; for his angry countenance caused their hearts to weigh very heavy within them, and his sharp speeches gave great offense to the demon of fever, who had never within all their experience conducted himself in the wayward, troubrous manner of his present manifestations.

"But the man will die!" said Moy Toy, looking down in angry despair at the wasted face and form, as the restless head of the patient turned from side to side, always weary, vainly seeking rest.

"Is he the first?" asked one of the cheerataghe. For like a physician of civilization, he by no means guaranteed the continuance of life by virtue of his science.

It was very honestly and earnestly exerted, and both he and his colleague felt all the virtuous rage of sustaining a grievous injustice when Moy Toy said, with a rancor that surprised them (for quarrels and unkindness to one another were almost unknown in the tribe, the utmost placidity of temper and mutual forbearance being *de rigueur*), "You promised rain,—and behold at this season of the year a drought lasting six weeks, and the planting of corn delayed till a famine threatens, and not a drop till to-day."

"A visitation! a visitation! because of the sins of the people and their hardness of heart!" cried the two magi in a breath.

Wherein they improved an advantage over the faculty of to-day.

Moy Toy silently gazed down at the rolling head and the fixed, absorbed eyes bent steadily on some phantasmagoria of the fever. He noted the weakness of the once clear, strong voice,—the definite, trained enunciation had sunk to a husky mutter. Still Laroche babbled of military operations, for now and again Moy Toy caught the phrases “quatre mortiers — Coehorn — champ de bataille — barils de poudre,” although the rest was unintelligible, for now he spoke continuously in French.

“He must live! He must live for the Cherokee nation!” exclaimed the chief, with the insistence of hoping against hope.

One of the cheerataghe had a fine, steady, acute eye, a hideously painted face, with the aspect of a bedlamite, arrayed as he was with buffalo horns and tail, and with his body stuck over with wings of owls, the calves of his legs hung with a dozen garters of rattling bell buttons, and a long-handled gourd filled with pebbles in his hands, which were covered with bear’s paws. Perhaps the patient’s delirium could present nothing more grotesquely, absurdly frightful.

“You, Moy Toy,” he said, in his grave, sonorous, sane voice, “you have given offense to the demon of fever. For when the sun is rising the man revives; he will take drink, although he cannot eat; he will speak Cherokee, softly, softly; he will close his eyes and sleep. And then come you! — with a troubled face, and a harsh voice, and an eager step, and a fierce hurry! And the demon of fever is angered, and the fever grows quicker, and more eager, and harsh, and angrier than you! And it rises and rises till the man will not drink and cannot see, and has no speech but a shred of French and screams for dreams that are without sleep!”

He looked to his colleague, who gravely nodded his fantastic head in corroboration.

Moy Toy silently studied the face first of one of the magicians, then of the other. Although immeasurably superstitious and credulous, he was yet grounded in craft and suspicion. And, in truth, perhaps he was not without justification ; the cheerataghe, like more modern disciples of *Æsculapius*, doubtless often attributed to other causes disasters consequent upon a lack of skill or its misdirection. In this instance, however, the value of the stake at hazard, the imputation of the malign personal influence of his presence, a vague indignation that he should be esteemed obnoxious to any being — even a demon of fever — rendered Moy Toy peculiarly alert, watchful, disposed to exact to the extremity of the possibilities.

The two cheerataghe, as his glance once more sought the pallid face, the ever-turning head on the pillow, looked anxiously at each other. For the face seemed death-stricken. The next moment they took sudden hope. A change, a vague, indefinable change, quivered over it. The jumble of French words faltered on Laroche's feeble tongue. With unexampled resolution, he pressed firmly his silent lips together. And in that silence the wary Indians heard what had come first to his ears. Even in the dullness of fever and the frenzy of delirium, he had interpreted its significance, so momentous it was to him. A voice it was in the broad spaces of the "beloved square" without, a bold, hearty, roaring voice, speaking the English language with a blatant Scotch accent.

The three Cherokees gazed at one another in tumultuous and contending emotions. They experienced much gratitude that the spark of perception intimated they might still hope. They could hardly repress their admiration of the finesse, the courage, the mental balance, that enabled Laroche to perceive the crisis, interpret its meaning, and meet

it with a sane judgment,—his self-control, which even in the thrall of fever could curb the infirmities of that weakly, babbling tongue, and silence the self-betrayal of the French speech upon it. All their excitement, however, was subordinated to the triumph in his craft that stimulated their own emulous resources. He was indeed in great danger. Emissaries of the French among the Indians, having done so much to instigate and maintain the late Cherokee War, were peculiarly obnoxious to the British authorities. In fact, rewards had been offered for their scalps, and by the late treaty the Cherokees themselves were pledged to arrest and surrender these enemies of the English. Moy Toy, making a gesture imposing secrecy, stepped out of the door to meet the visitor, who was clamoring as loudly and boldly in the “beloved square” as if he were in his own byre.

“Heigh, Moy Toy !” he cried bluffly, breaking away from the “second men,” as the subordinate authorities of the town were called, “how’s a’ wi’ ye, man ?”

He was a tall, heavy, awkward fellow, with a boisterous, assured address, a broad, red face, light almost flaxen hair, plaited and tied with a leather thong in a queue, arrayed in buckskins but with long cowhide boots, and enveloped in a great match-coat, for it had been raining heavily, and the drops still clung upon the tufts and fibres of the cloth. His cap of coonskin, with the tail as a pendant, was pushed back from his brow, revealing remarkably straight, regular, and well-formed features and shrewd, blue eyes. He held under his arm a stout horsewhip as a companion rather than a weapon, for his pistols were in the holsters on the saddle of his nag, which, drenched to the skin, hung down its head where it stood unceremoniously hitched to a stake whereto was sometimes bound a victim for the torture. The guest made no pretense of adapting to the Indian ceremonials the manners in which he had been bred, as was the custom

of strangers and traders generally, or of recognizing any princely arrogations on the part of Moy Toy. He advanced with great, muscular strides toward his averse host,— who visibly winced from the overpowering redundancy, as it were, of his presence,— seized upon the limp hand of the Indian, and crushed it in his cordial grasp as if Moy Toy had been also a bold Briton.

“ How’s a’ wi’ ye ? — an’ what d’ ye hear frae Charles-toun ? ”

There was scarce similarity between this hearty, warm-blooded entity and a snake, but Moy Toy, of his own volition, would have touched neither except upon necessity or in the way of business. The fibres of his hand tingled with the consciousness of the detested impact, long after the trader’s unwelcome grasp had relaxed and his manual energy was expending itself in aimlessly cracking his whip at the sand of the smooth spaces of the “ beloved square.” There was a spark of smouldering fire in the eyes of the Indian, a tense restraint in the muscles of his shoulders and his straight back, as if he would fain hold himself under strong control. Albeit his interlocutor spoke English he understood Cherokee, and Moy Toy replied in his native tongue ; thus each talked without solicitude, for each was comprehensible to the other. The Indian said that he had no news from Carolina and inquired in turn, but with scant show of interest, “ as to the Muscogee ? ”

“ I begin to think a’ thae carles are dead ! ” exclaimed Jock Lesly, with a vigorous snap of the whip. “ They were looked for to join the Chickasaw and the English agen the French away yon to the south. But deil ane o’ them hae minted a word yet ! ”

The Cherokee’s stately dignity, his cautious, reserved speech, contrasted strongly with the Scotchman’s unsuspicious plainness, as he waited with an air of expectation. If the Indian had had news, he would not have bartered

it with the trader, nor indeed had the trader repaired hither for what he could hear. This mutual realization embarrassed the pause, yet Jock Lesly still sharply cracked his whip at the sand and hesitated as to what he should say.

With all the thrifty instincts of the canny Scotch pioneer of that day, with all the bold, bluff courage of his vigorous personality, Jock Lesly had been the first, and as yet the only trader to venture back within the remote mountain region, whence the fury of the terrible Cherokee War had driven all mercantile enterprise. Indeed, the treaty was hardly signed before he was again in the place that had known him of yore, his trading-house rebuilt, depending for his safety partly on the treaty and partly on his utility to the savages, his popularity among them, and his conscience void of offense against them.

“I hae had as muckle o’ the rack an’ rief o’ the war as ye,” he was wont to say, “an’ the Lard kens I wad wuss to be canty and quiet enow.”

As he stood looking aimlessly about, he noted that the ranges were all full of mist between the domes, and from the soft densities of its white, fluffy masses those eminences rose in sombre, purple hues and massive effects against a pale gray sky, along which lay horizontal clouds, of a darker, denser gray. The river, with lace-like films of mist hanging in the budding green willows and pawpaws of its banks, had the tint of burnished copper. The great trees of the limitless forests, and those gigantic growths around the town, dripped with moisture as they hung down their sodden branches about the newly washed boles, the bark so dense of color as to suggest the effect of being freshly painted. A dull day it was, and the atmosphere, devoid of all elasticity, seemed almost too lifeless to breathe. He broke at last from his dubitation and began in his neighborly wise:—

“A-weel, a-weel, Moy Toy, there hae been a wheen idle,

feckless loons frae your toun o' Tellico down to Ioco Town aboot my trading-house. An' there they lifted a few trifles frae the stock, — but I 'se no grudge that, — a few bit duds. But then they slartered a couple o' sheep, — an auld yowe and a yearlin'."

Moy Toy's face grew dark with anger, and yet almost kind with concern.

The good-natured Scotchman hastened to qualify. "They never carried aff the meat nor yet the pelts, — they scalpit the twa puir beastises first, an' then cut their throats. I'm no the waur for the lack o' mutton, but" —

Moy Toy's countenance of amazed disfavor, astounded at the account of this curious emprise, coerced sudden intelligibility.

"Jus' a wheen feckless laddies aping their elders," explained Jock Lesly, doubtfully. Then with an uneasy laugh he added, "An' the bairns cam hame wearin' the scalps at their belts. I chased them a' the way with the powney."

Moy Toy did not laugh. Indian children play as do children of other nations, reducing to the circuit of their narrow round — a juvenile microcosm — all the methods and events of the elder world. But this exploit transcended the limit of verisimilitude and entered on the realms of the verities. The small banditti unchecked would soon venture further and bring upon their elders anger, retaliation, embroilment, with the trader, and premature fracture of the treaty.

"They shall be dry-scratched," said Moy Toy promptly.

"Oh, wow, man!" exclaimed Jock Lesly sharply, as if he had been suddenly pinched. "Na, — na, — not dry-scratched! Odd! I could na sleep in my bed if the hempies were dry-scratched for me! — they ran sae supple — the knaves! It is an unchancy, ugly thing, that dry-scratching! Cuff the bairns weel — or gie them a flogging

they 'll remember. Man alive ! flogging is healthy for boy or beast ! I 've had it a thousand times frae my auld daddy, God bless him ! Flogging is what 's made the British nation what it is, — but dry-scratching, — I 'd die of it mysel', now. Oh, man, — oh, man, — flog 'em a little, — but dry-scratched — oh, wow, wow ! ”

He caught at the arm of the august Moy Toy, who was more accustomed to order the torture and burning of Christian captives than the punishment of a few children who had offended against the municipal law. He made no sign and stood as adamant, but other Cherokees, who had joined them, were smiling and looking at each other with the softened countenances that express a gentle ridicule. Despite their friendly scorn, the kindly trader's depreciation of the punishment of the children and his wild and earnest plea in their behalf could not fail to commend him to their tolerance, and went far to explain a sort of popularity that he had enjoyed among them. They knew that the little drama of the storming of the sheep-fold and massacre of its inmates was too significant to pass without notice, and for this very significance the punishment decreed was to be immediate and sharp, to teach the youngsters where fun ends and serious fact begins. Indeed Moy Toy himself saw to the preparations for the capture and condign penance of the miscreants, who, having returned from the war-path scathless, were now in full swing of a mimic celebration of victory, the triumphant scalps in evidence, and all the wide-eyed children of the town in joyful participation.

“ Deil hae ye, then, for a fause-hearted, unceevilized tyke as ever lived ! ” exclaimed Lesly, as the chief drew off from his grasp. “ Egad ! I can ne'er abide to hear 'em skreigh like that, — wow, — wow ! ” And clapping his hands to his ears, the Scotch trader fairly ran off as the first shrill plaint of protest rose upon the air.

Now it was a point of juvenile honor to bear this kind

of punishment as stoically as might be, and a severe dry-scratching, always carefully adapted in ferocity to the age of the delinquent and his capacity to support pain, usually drew forth a tear or two and sometimes only murmuring sighs. The habitual gentleness of the savages with their children doubtless convinced the rising generation that the punishment was only intended for their benefit and no whit administered in anger or tyranny. Therefore in submitting with a good grace they were contributing so far as in them lay to their own moral culture, and were ambitious of the stoical poise, perhaps to make the penalty as salutary as possible and go as far in reform as it would.

The two little Indians were easily stripped of such semblance of garments as they wore, and as they were being bound to the stake they craftily set up a wild and poignant shriek upon seeing the Scotchman in full flight across the "beloved square," being apprised by the comments of the laughing bystanders of his intercession in their behalf and his aversion to the sight and sound of their woe. This had considerable justification, for thus bound and helpless they were sharply scratched from head to foot repeatedly with an instrument formed of snake's teeth fastened in the end of a stick.

Because of the unusual commotion with which the affair had been invested, no one noticed that the refuge to which the Scotchman, familiar enough with the place, bent his steps was the stranger-house. He burst in, and started back astounded at the figures of the cheerataghe arrayed to frighten the fever in such manner as might have frightened the devil. Then the trader's eyes fell upon the white man lying helpless on the brink of the grave, as it were, the victim of the fever.

"Lord save us!" exclaimed Lesly, with a sudden change of countenance, "wha hae we here?"

The two cheerataghe, unaware of the very disconcerting

effect of their own professional appearance, themselves showed every sign of fear, incongruous enough with their terrifying aspect. In fact they could scarcely have been more alarmed had Satan himself appeared, for they were unacquainted with him and his reputation, while quite well aware who and what was Jock Lesly. The presence of the French emissary here was a breach of the treaty lately renewed, under which the Cherokee tribe traded with the British, and a menace to the privileges promised to the Indians under its stipulations. They hardly knew how to reply, and the abrupt entrance of Moy Toy was like a rescue from mortal peril. The chief had bethought himself suddenly of the possible suspicion of the stranger's presence here that might be casually conveyed to Jock Lesly's perceptions, while free in the town unguarded and unwatched. Anything so complete, so inexplicable, so irrefutable as his intrusion and the evidence of his own eyes the chief had not anticipated for a moment, and his ready resources of subterfuge failed him for the nonce.

"Puir chield! I doubt na he is in the dead thraw!" the trader muttered, his compassionate instincts uppermost. Then impressed by something unfamiliar in the cast of the features, he asked doubtfully, "Is he frae the colonies, — or overseas?"

Laroche had been divested of his fine French uniform when he had been brought here ill; it had been carefully put away in view of its future use by his captors, being an official garb, for the crafty Moy Toy fancied some occasion might arise when it would serve a diplomatic turn. Moreover the gold lace and fine cloth were much too dazzling, considered merely as booty, to be spared to the prisoner as habiliments in which to be ill or tortured or buried. In the varied experiments of the cheerataghe, contending with the rigors of the chill following the fever, Laroche had been clad in buckskins, supplemented now and then in the con-

vulsions of the shudders and shivers by one of those feather-wrought mantles that attracted so much attention from the early travelers in this region, the effect of which was pronounced "extraordinary charming." There was naught to indicate his nationality or his estate as captive. Every evidence of care and solicitude environed the patient, and Moy Toy's explanation seemed obviously genuine.

The sick man had come to Great Tellico, the chief said, with some of the Cherokee tribesmen who had been up to Virginia, and being taken ill they had left him to recover while they went their various ways homeward. He did not ask the man's name of them, thinking to learn it from himself. He had been only a little ailing at first, but now one hardly knew what to make of him.

Jock Lesly seated on one side of the cabin on the divan, with his hands on his ponderous knees, his head bent a trifle forward, gazed thoughtfully across the room at the fevered patient, as not so long ago the Choctaw Mingo had sat and glowered at the recumbent frame then sunken in sleep.

"He is gaun to dee!" the trader remarked dolorously, at length, and the words, bespeaking his own fear, fell with a crushing force on the hopes of Moy Toy.

Jock Lesly drew a long and labored sigh. If the sorrows of the little dry-scratched Indians — wicked varlets — could take such hold upon the sympathies of that frank, compassionate heart of his, how the sight of this tragedy racked him, — this valuable life going out in exile, among savages, with not one intelligent, civilized effort made to save it.

"Gin I had him ance at hame!" he cried, in futile aspiration, "I doubt but what Jeemes's powder might wark a cure!"

"Carry him there! The demon of the fever may not dare to cross a stranger's threshold!" cried Moy Toy, with a sudden inspiration. He was thinking very rapidly. If

some untoward chance should reveal the secret of the nationality of the man, which even in delirium he instinctively guarded, why Jock Lesly and his household were practically alone here, hundreds of miles from any English settlements, and accidents were lamentably common in the distracted Cherokee country at present,—so frequent, indeed, that the discovery might go no farther! “The Cherokees will aid their guest. The brothers of the tribe will rejoice to bear the burden of a litter,” he continued. “The demon of the fever maybe does not know the way to Ioco Town and cannot follow!”

Jock Lesly, heeding little of these hopeful schemes for confounding the demon of the fever, sat doubtful nevertheless and dumfounded. A vague sentiment of suspicion had been lurking in his mind,—first, that the Indians had not expected him to discover so unusual an inmate of their stranger-house as this white man, and that he and his status were not as represented. Then as Moy Toy so freely and instantly relinquished his custody, the trader experienced as vague a doubt if the patient had had fair play among them, since they were eager to get rid of him and of such responsibility as his care imposed.

“The puir Injun!” Jock Lesly said to himself reproachfully, “if I’ll suspicion him o’ ane thing I’ll e’en doubt him o’ the contrary.”

The man lay as in a “dwam,” to use Lesly’s expression. The trader crossed the room, felt the temperature of the forehead, noted the dull, opaque eyes, and laid his hand almost paternally upon the light brown hair of a fine, silky quality, dense and curling.

The trader was an unsophisticated man, unlearned and of a scanty experience of the world, his life having been spent for the last ten years in the treadmill round of a British factory in the Cherokee country. He realized his responsibility and he shrank from it. He looked at the impassive

cheerataghe and received no light upon his course. He glanced out of the door.

A change had come over the landscape. The wind was astir,—the clouds were flying before it. Between their dense white masses the sky showed intensely blue, inconceivably high. The sun shone with a vernal brilliance,—it would not be unduly chilly by noon. Fragrance was in the air, so fine, so fresh, so illusive. One might say that it was the scent of the budding wild cherry; or, no,—the early blooming grape; or, stay,—the delicate aroma of the bark of a tree, touched to this distillation of incense by some happy combination of sun and wind and rain. The whole scene beckoned, lured, besought.

“An’ what for no?” cried Jock Lesly, his resolution taken at last. “As weel dee under the canopy o’ heaven as in an Injun’s cabin!”

Every precaution that could be devised was taken. The litter, fashioned under his directions, was furnished by Moy Toy munificently, freely, with the softest skins for mattress, with fine fur mantles for covering that were impervious to water in view of sudden rain, and with others, feather-wrought, light, and warm, to fend off all deleterious effects of exposure. A dozen tribesmen bore it, stepping lightly, easily, on their springy feet, unshod save for the elastic moccasins, and a dozen more mounted men accompanied it to act as relays, and, thus relieving one another, suffer no fatigue to retard their progress.

“A body wad think the creature was a Christian instead of a doited heathen!” Lesly said to himself, impressed by Moy Toy’s liberality and anxiety in this work of mercy.

For Moy Toy had despaired of the efforts of the cheerataghe to exorcise the demon of fever and save this life to the utilities of the Cherokee nation.

“It is some devil of the paleface that has taken hold of

him," the chief said sagely to the cheerataghe. "Let him have the white man's charm worked on him!"

For if the French officer should die on the way to Ioco Town, would he not also have died at Tellico?

IV

THE moment that Laroche was recalled to life was never very accurately defined in his mind, so gradually did a full consciousness return. Nor was he sure how entirely delirium had held him in its delusions. His speculations were of a metaphysical tendency when he afterward dwelt, with a microscopic scrutiny, upon those phenomena of involved cerebral processes manifested in the sudden silencing of the French words upon his dreaming tongue, as it vaguely shaped the confused thoughts of a stupefied brain, — all upon one coherent impulse, on the sound of an English phrase spoken in an English voice !

That salutary monition abode with him, whether he slept, whether he waked, whether he lay in that dim border world of swoons between sleeping and waking. He was stricken dumb, although he could hardly be said to have heard, for he consciously heard naught. And if, he argued, these perceptions could have been so alert to the mere vocal vibrations of the air, the instinct of danger so keenly receptive, the will so strangely responsive to the demands of those supersubtle, unclassified faculties, although every voluntary function of the muscles lay prostrate, and every recognized process of the brain was paralyzed, did not this imply some curious duality of identity, an absolute independence of the intellectual life, unrelated to the bodily functions, since so complete a solution of continuity had supervened ? It might have been that, though he accounted himself a mere blunt soldier and upbraided his mismanagement that had jeopardized the interests of the French mis-

sion, he was so complete a diplomat at heart that he could withhold with a nerveless hand, hear with a deaf ear, plot albeit with a swooning brain, and hush the babblings of delirium to keep a secret, of which at the moment he had no consciousness !

Thus, although his pulses ran riot, he continued to maintain a tense silence. When the tumultuous phantasmagoria of frenzy gave place to visions as vain but calmer, he found himself still mute, quiet, orderly, exact, mentally verifying with mathematical accuracy the relative measurements of a line of field fortifications, so designed that an attacking column might be enfiladed thence. "For nothing," he said to himself again and again, "can stop an attacking column that is not enfiladed." Later, he was considering the possibility of defending effectively a certain salient angle of an imaginary redoubt.

To prevent the enemy from carrying the redoubt by storming this too acute angle he began to mount a battery *en barbette* in the dead salient. The doubt that now and again seized him as to the necessity of these labors was dispelled by the actual sight of the canvas walls of his tent about him, and therefore he would busily absorb himself once more in these duties, and actively prepared to defend the ditch of the redoubt by constructing there a solid *caponnière*.

The placid peace of the man who is consciously doing his best in his chosen vocation pervaded his whole system, mental, moral, and physical, and brought refreshing, curative sleep to his pillow. So definite a hold had this impression taken upon his mind, sleeping and waking, that one morning he lifted his head with a start of alarm. There upon the sloping canvas walls was a yellow streak, all the more vivid for the white glare of the cloth in the rising sun,— and how had he not heard the reveille ? The echo of the bugle was in his ears, the molten, golden notes of the old French call.

A strong tremor ran through the elbow on which he had supported his head. Alack! no stirring, martial strain had summoned him. He lay back on his pillow, realizing in dismay and yet in surprise that the walls of the tent of his fancy were the dimity curtains of a bed, and he began to remember vaguely the chances that had befallen him and to seek the grace to be thankful.

“I will wait and see what cause for gratitude I may have,” said the unsubdued inner man, while his lips framed the verbal show of a thanksgiving. His state of mind might have furnished still more suggestive details of the possibility of a dual life in one identity.

Nevertheless he recognized the fact that as far as the bodily entity was concerned it was distinctly comfortable. Now and again he dropped off into short, luxurious naps, even between the stages of his investigation of his surroundings. In one waking interval he took account of the furnishings of the bed: it bore sheets, a rarity of the place and time so unexpected, so inexplicable, that it roused new doubts and anxieties as to where he was, what had befallen him, and what might yet betide. Still he could but finger them in pleasure and with a childish relish of luxury; — snow-white they were, of a heavy, fine linen smoothly woven, with the fragrance of the wood violets of the bleaching ground, and the freshness of the wind yet in their folds, as it seemed, — and once more he closed his eyes.

When he wakened again he had so far accustomed himself to the homely opulence of blankets and bedding that he was prepared in a measure for the night-rail in which he found himself clad, but not for its size. As he stretched out the voluminous length of its great sleeve and took account of its breadth of shoulder, “A big man in good earnest this was made for, — I shall take care to be friends with the monster!” he said.

He bethought himself suddenly of the English words

that he had heard,—a mere sound and locution,—yet this was the only definite recollection that had stayed in his mind since the moment he had beheld the flying figures of the Choctaws speeding across the “beloved square” to the pettiaugre. He must bear a caution,—a Frenchman, and possibly liable to be accused as a spy! He lifted his wasted hands to his head: it was enveloped in a red night-cap, with a gay tassel swaying on its fez-like peak; and much he needed it, for the whole head had been shaved, sometime since evidently, for delicate tendrils of a new growth were starting there and he felt fibres moist and soft about his forehead.

A step sounded suddenly outside, heavy but cautious; a stealthy hand was laid upon the curtain; and as it was drawn aside the red face of a man of middle age, tall, powerful, flaxen-haired, with high cheek bones, a man whom Laroche had never before seen, looked in upon him. Grave, astonished, delighted, the stranger seemed,—with a sudden twinkle of comprehension in his blue eyes and an outburst of joy in his big voice that made the bedstead tremble on the uneven puncheons of the floor.

“Hegh, callant!” he cried, as their eyes met, “but this dings a’! Lilias! Callum!” he began to call over his shoulder to other inmates of the house in so stalwart a roar that it might have been heard half a mile. It easily penetrated the flimsy partitions of the primitive building, and the feet of those summoned were audible rapidly approaching. “Here’s the callant!” he exclaimed, as the door opened. “Here he is,—a’ himsel’ again!”

He had the manner of announcing the arrival of a guest, and Laroche easily divined, from the hiatus in his recollections, that he could hardly have been considered present hitherto, although visible in the flesh.

A young man, with less enthusiasm, but still an air of proper pleasure, partly induced by genuine gratulation upon

so happy an augury of the termination of a serious illness, and partly in propitiation of the elder, whom it was evident he would have crossed upon no slight occasion, advanced to the bedside and declared that he was glad to see that the patient had recovered his consciousness and doubted not that he would soon be on his feet. This young man wore the Highland garb, from which Laroche inferred, somewhat quakingly, that he was of the British soldiery who had been active in this region during the previous two years, in the campaigns conducted by Montgomerie and afterward by Grant against the Cherokees, in which the Montgomerie Highlanders (the Seventy-Seventh Regiment) and others had participated, for at this time the national dress was proscribed except for those enlisted in British regiments. A barbarous garb the Frenchman considered it, hardly a whit in advance of the savage decorations he had been called upon to note at Tellico Great, — so strong were the international prejudices of those days. For in truth it was a manly and graceful figure appropriately bedight, — with swaying kilt, the short coat, the blue bonnet, with its bit of bearskin decoration. The young Highlander's fair hair hung down thick and half curling from beneath this blue bonnet and lay in an effectively contrasting tint upon the collar of the red jacket, which constituted at that time part of the dress of the Forty-Second Regiment, and was worn with a red waistcoat. The latter, we are informed, was made over, in the governmental thriftiness, from the red coat after a year's wear, while the plaid, furnished biennially, subsequently did duty cut down and frugally reconstructed into the filibeg. But if the wildernesses of the Great Smoky of that day at all resembled the tangled forest densities which still remain, the military tailor who refashioned any garments whatever from the gear that survived the marches through those brambly mountain jungles deserved immortalizing above all other knights of the shears.

The dark blues and greens of the sombre "Black Watch" tartan in Callum's plaid and kilt afforded an added fairness to his locks. His florid complexion showed a fluctuating red and white. His blue eyes were large and well set, with lashes and eyebrows much darker than the shade of his hair. He had high cheek bones and an expressive mouth, with finely cut lips, red and mobile, often parted in the blithest laughter for very slight cause, and exhibiting two unbroken rows of strong, white teeth. His smiling face was as frank and honest as the sun.

Laroche's sudden dislike of this young stranger surprised himself and dismayed him as well. For would he have experienced this emotion were the third member of the little group that stood by the bed different from what she was? Her likeness to her father might have served as an illustration of the apotheosis of humanity in a spiritual miracle. Jock Lesly's flaxen hair, half gray, half tow, was golden in the glistening soft skeins of silk that swept upward from her brow in heavy undulations. The blue veins that showed so definitely in the temples could not have vaunted their delicate tracery through a skin less fine and fair. Here and there was a freckle, but a faint blush-rose bloomed over the whole cheek as if it sweetened the air. Her figure, draped in a sober, gray gown, was tall and strong, but a trifle angular, denoting more bone and muscle than exuberance of flesh. In fact she was frankly thin, although her face was so delicately rounded. No small rosebud mouth, but shapely, dainty, red lips, the upper deeply indented in the centre like the curve of a bow, opened over white, regularly formed teeth,—a mouth of beauty but of character also, whence might proceed sage household counsels, and words full of judgment, just reproof, and deserved applause. She was the ideal of a helpmeet. She seemed to Laroche the thought God had in mind when He made woman, before she so whimsically

refashioned herself after her own feminine ideal. And if any man deemed that he needed help it was Callum MacIlvesty, and that the woman to assist him on the path of life was Lilius Lesly.

If aught of the cynical reflections that this discernment of the persons and predilections of the group afforded Laroche appeared in his worn and wasted countenance it went undiscovered, so great was their pleasure in the success of their ministrations and his happy prospect of a speedy recovery. They were all aimlessly laughing from sheer triumph; only there was a suggestion of moisture in the eyes of Lilius,—or were they always so liquid, so luminous, so deeply blue, so heavily lashed with those long, dark fringes.

“And ye ’ll breakfast enow !” roared Jock Lesly heartily. “Lay the cloth here, Lilius. We ’se all take potluck wi’ him !”

The young Highlander pleasantly seconded the hospitable motion, and the objection advanced by Lilius that the invalid was not equal to entertaining so much company was drowned and overborne in her father’s imperative orders.

“Aye, lass, ye ken how to care for a sick man, but this fallow is weel now an’ a proper lad, strong enough. D’ ye think ye ’ll hae him doun on spoon meat an’ gruel an’ sic like fripperies a’ his days ! That’s aye the trouble wi’ the wimmin. They want to master ye ! If ye are weel, they drive ye ! An’ if ye are ill, they own ye ! Na,—na,—lay the cloth,—an’ we ’ll hear him tell his name an’ business.”

This suggestion placed Laroche upon his guard, but being of a quick and keen imagination and having a good sense of verisimilitude, he had his account of himself ready long before he was called upon to render it. In fact Jock Lesly was graciously disposed to be autobiographical himself, and in the course of his prelection was explained the unusual

presence of a white woman in these regions at present; for the Scotch or English traders did not risk their families here, but left them far away in the safe precincts of the small white settlements or the coast towns. His daughter, Jock Lesly said, had heard, — and who could not hear anything “in sic a wild, ambiguous country” (to use his own expression), “where the news is carried by wild Injuns, wha lie, it seems, for the sheer purpose of provin’ themsel’s the children o’ the deil, wha is the father o’ lies an’ liars, — an’ a monstrous progeny he hae, to be sure! — a-weel, the lassie heard that her father — an’ that’s mysel’ an’ not the deil — had been ta’en doun wi’ the smallpox, an’ the bairn was worried out o’ her life, mair especially as sae mony people — thae wild Injuns in particular — were deein’ wi’ the dis temper, havin’ nae proper sense how it suld be treated. An’ sae the lassie started out for Ioco Town, — not that I hae forgiven Liliias for puttin’ hersel’ in sic a danger, forbye makin’ a fule o’ me, as weel as of Callum MacIlvesty also, — though *that’s* a smaller matter. A-weel — Callum heard o’ her intention an’ hired a wheen o’ young packmen in Charles toun — they being mostly idle at this season, — *he* ca’s ‘em ‘gillies,’ — an’ started out with her, havin’ leave o’ absence to veesit his ‘Merican relations, Callum bein’ a far awa’ cousin, — my mither was sibb to his mither, — an’ he over took Liliias as she was about to come alane frae Charles toun wi’ the under-trader an’ a packman or twa, an’ a lot o’ dour red deils of Injuns that could hae scalpit the haill party, gin the mind had ta’en them. An’ I as hearty an’ thrivin’ as e’er I was in a’ my life! ”

He paused to emphasize the incongruity.

“ But, lad,” resumed the joyous host, “ a’ the bairn’s preparations for the sick that she fetched wi’ her on the pack-horse were na wasted at last, — for the Jeemes’s powder an’ the pills an’ the lotions an’ a’ thae dinged things she meant for me hae a’ gane into your inside, man, an’ the

sheets an' the curtains an' sic-like were nae sooner unpacked than we clappit ye intill 'em!"

"An' now will ye no tak a dish o' your ain chocolate?" said Lilias, with a smile curving her red lips, "that we fetched a' the way frae Charlestoun for ye, expressly, Mr. —"

Her father remarked her hesitation.

"Aye," he exclaimed, with his mouth full of bread and meat. "Gie us your name, sir, — Maister — what?"

"Wilson, — Thomas Wilson," replied Laroche, relying on the perfection of his English. But albeit an excellent linguist, he rejoiced in the discovery of their nationality as an additional pledge of safety, realizing that his English would better pass muster since they themselves spoke the language so ill.

"A proper name, — Tam Wilson, — I hae known a score of 'em," said Jock Lesly, setting down the glass in which, following the old fashion, he drank something far stronger for breakfast than tea. He interpolated at this crisis a remonstrance with his daughter against the chocolate as a foreign kickshaw, protesting it "ower flimsy for a gude British stomach;" but the foreigner was secretly truly grateful for her persistence, for with the rising yet squeamish appetite of a convalescent, he doubted his capacity, even in the interests of his disguise, to forego the chocolate in favor of the ale and brandy with which the two Scotchmen moistened the meal.

"An' whaur do ye hail frae?" Jock Lesly asked.

The question was sufficiently difficult of reply. Louisiana or the Illinois, in the French occupation, was obviously out of the question. Yet should the guest say Georgia or South Carolina, he might be exposed to conversation touching localities familiar to them which he did not know: people — citizens, as well as officials — with whom he must needs seem acquainted as were they; the names of ships or

rivers or towns, all necessarily household words to one of the more southern provinces, yet of which he was densely ignorant.

"Virginia," he said at a venture, "about Williamsburg."

To his consternation Jock Lesly laid down his knife and fork, and he knew instinctively it was no slight matter that could check their activity. But for the fictitious glow that the hot chocolate had set up in his veins he might have succumbed to a rigor that had no relation to the vicissitudes of his disease.

"Now I hope ye are nane o' thae Firginians⁷ that latterly hae been tampering wi' our Injuns, an' invitin' 'em to come for their goods to Firginia, an' seekin' to coup our trade out o' our ain hands. Hae ye seen Governor Bull's letter — Lieutenant-Governor Bull o' South Carolina — Governor Bull's ain letter to the governor o' Firginia, man?"

It was well for Laroche that his cadaverous aspect, as he lay in bed, propped by pillows into a half sitting posture, his face almost as ghastly white as the voluminous folds of the night-rail — the scarlet flannel nightcap, with its gay and flaunting tassel accentuating his pallor — was ascribed altogether to the effects of illness. Much of it was doubtless due to his perturbation of mind and the conscious jeopardy of his position, although he managed to hold with a steady hand the cup containing his chocolate and to maintain a quiet, interrogative gaze as his eyes met the Scotchman's eager blue orbs, and he replied succinctly, but definitely, in the negative.

"A-weel, man," said Jock Lesly, the importance of the subject precluding the resumption of his knife and fork, "Governor Bull did set forth and make known unto the Governor of Firginia that we of the king's province o' South Carolina had suffered much in the auld Proprietary days with thae bloody loons o' Injuns, an' had warked wi' 'em an' wrastled sair wi' 'em, an' had made unco gude

friends wi' several strong tribes on our borders, — Creeks, Chickasaws, an' mair especially the Cherokees, till this late war, — all through the privileeges o' the trade we had wi' them an' the restrictions an' facilities of the licensed traders the government establishes an' mainteens amang them, to furnish them wi' a' their needcessities, an' powder an' lead — a deal mair than is gude for them ! An' if Firginia draws aff this trade frae these distant tribes, for the sake o' the bit profit to be had frae it, Georgia an' South Carolina hae nae means o' keepin' thae blackguards o' Injuns in order close on our settlements, whilk will be left to their mercies. Governor Glen said the same years ago."

He paused with earnest, convincing eyes, while the guest held his cup motionless and listened.

"Cain in the old days jaloosed his brother an' for rivalry killed him, but I'se warrant even he wad na hae sold him fur a shillin'. It 's later times hae taught us better — or waur !"

"My dear sir," exclaimed Tam Wilson, "you may rest assured that I am seeking no Indian trade for Virginia."

Jock Lesly drew a long breath of relief.

"A-weel," he said, easily placated, "the Governor of Firginia answered and promised to let the Injun trade be as it was built. He had na seen the matter in sic a serious light, he said. No man could speak fairer. But I thought — I dooted — leastwise — hegh, man, what errand did bring you then to Great Tellico ?"

"A matter of business," said the French officer quickly. "Some of the Cherokees sold a lot of horses to our neighborhood near a year ago, and this spring most of them disappeared. It is said always that horses bred in the Indian country go back yearly to their old grass."

Jock Lesly nodded his head in confirmation, his mouth again full, knife and fork plying.

"Is it true ? — I doubted it. But I came with some

neighbors as far as Tellico. I fell ill at Tellico, — and I remember no more."

"They went off and left you!" exclaimed the young Highlander, with a touch of indignation.

"Wow, man, — what fearsome looking worrieows be thae medicine-men, — thae cheerataghe! But Moy Toy was kind and helpful, though fine he liked to get rid of ye! That was what made me jaloose that mebbe you were meddlin' wi' the trade." Lesly recurred to the subject.

"How do thae Injuns come by sic prodigious fine horses?" demanded Callum MacIlvesty, effecting a diversion with more delicate tact than might have been anticipated from his lowly station and coarse garb as a common soldier. Laroche began to understand that the Highlander, despite his position and rude dialect, was of a higher social grade in his own country than these compatriots of his, and that their "far awa" connection with his family was a source of pride to them, albeit the relation of wooer and wooed had compassed a certain reversal of the natural order of precedence. It occurred to his quick mind immediately that one of the many individual disasters involved in the national calamities of the Scotch rebellions of 1715 and 1745 was represented in the impoverishment and exile of this scion of a family of degree, perhaps even of high birth, for the young man used their vernacular evidently by reason of association and lack of education rather than station. He had sundry unmistakable marks of a highly bred gentleman, despite his evident poverty. Laroche knew that certain such, serving as soldiers of fortune, held commissions in the foreign armies of Europe, while a few others, more destitute of money and influence, could be found as "private men" in those Highland regiments recruited by the British government for service in America against the French and Indians, and officered in several instances, strangely enough, by men who had recently themselves been arrayed in arms against the dynasty they now supported.

"Their horses come frae the Spanish barbs that De Soty an' his men left amang them — an' I wuss we had naething waur frae the dooms meddlin' Spanish than their cattle. Lord, sir, the lies they tell the puir Injuns! — that the British are determinate to sweep them aff the face o' the warld!"

"The Spaniards are na sae kittle as the French," said Callum MacIlvesty.

"The French," rejoined Jock Lesly, bringing his clenched fist down on the table, — "the French are the deevil! Did ye notice, lad, how mony o' the Cherokees can speak a little French, — nae mair than a 'polly voo' or sic like, — but sae mony!"

Laroche was conscious and out of countenance. So weak he was he could ill resist the strain of anxiety. "I did not notice — I was there at Tellico so short a time — what am I saying? — I do not know how long I was there nor how you happened to find me!" But he could not divert his host from the subject.

"As sure as you are an unsanctified sinner thae gabbling, Louisiana French bodies hae been again meddlin' wi' the Cherokees an' their trade," declared Lesly solemnly. "Moy Toy was too polite by half, — onything to be rid o' me, — dry-scratchin' the weans that kilt my sheep till their screechings wad hae melted a heart o' stane! An' when I begged him to let me ha' the loan o' ye for a while, he happed ye in a' his fine furs. I had to be gey carefu' in returnin' them a'."

So they were within reach of Moy Toy and the town of Great Tellico by an hour's travel, perhaps, or two. Laroche felt his heart sink. He had not counted on this possibility nor on the capacity of the Indians to keep his secret. Nay, so capricious was the temper of the Cherokees that he could not be sure of their will to conceal the fact of his nationality and his connection with the Franco-Choctaw embassy. Even his own mission, the confidential

and private assurances of the French government which he had conveyed to Great Tellico, might now be maliciously divulged as a means of currying favor with the British, — since the utility of the promises he had made seemed a thing of the past and the prospect which they had presented had faded like a mirage into thin air. His face, with these thoughts in his mind, showed so sharp a change that Lilius, alarmed, rose with a protest. Even Jock Lesly permitted himself to be convinced that the session of breakfast should not be unduly prolonged, and Callum MacIlvesty shook up the pillows and drew the curtains, and the Frenchman sank down in silence — not to sleep, he stipulated within himself, but to ponder, to devise, to plot.

He slept unaware, unadvisedly, peacefully as a three years' child. And he dreamed placidly and in satisfaction. Moy Toy came and drew the curtains, he thought, and looked at him with keen and friendly eyes, and with a significant finger on his lips. When he woke at length, so far had the bodily man got the better of the intellectual entity which led together a dual existence that he felt scant care for aught, — his detention, the French interest, Moy Toy's possible disclosures, — if but he had a sup of that mutton broth, the enticing odors of which permeated the whole house. As he himself, with his thin hand, pulled aside the curtain that he might call to Callum MacIlvesty to beseech a share in that delectable burden of the family board, he burnt his wasted fingers against the hot bowl which Lilius was in the act of bringing to the bedside, and he hardly could wait to join in the laugh which the two Scotchmen set up in triumph on the recovery of his appetite.

If it could make them happy to see another man eat, he ministered lavishly to their felicity in the days that ensued.

At first he was unsteady enough on his feet when he was permitted to quit the haven of the bed. He could only make short voyages, as it were, from one chair to an-

other, catching at everything that came in his way for support. But although of no great strength or stature he was of a good, compact physique, and once "on the mend," as Jock Lesly expressed it, he progressed rapidly. He developed to his surprise a sort of luxurious inertia; he would fall asleep after dinner on the shady porch, his head against the doorpost. Naught in Ioco Town was so lazy save an old collie sleeping at his feet in the sun. His inaction extended to his mental processes,—he revolted from thought. He would not address himself to consider his plight, his jeopardy, the future of his mission. In fact all his faculties were instinctively quiescent, facilitating recovery. He felt even that he had joyfully dispensed with his old troublous identity. As Tam Wilson he was a new man, with no plans, no past, no obligations, no imperative military duty. The pioneer garb of buckskin, with its many fringes and leather belt and coonskin cap, that he was constrained to wear aided his release from himself. It was like being in some new world, this freedom of the ways of the household, this transition into the identity of a man who had no past, no secrets, no duties, no future. A joyous, kindly fellow he was, too, and all who looked on him liked him.

"This is what I should have been, uninfluenced, uninhibited; Tam Wilson is really I,—unhampered by circumstance," he said to himself.

His haunts were chiefly about the dwelling, which was situated near the trading-house and in the very centre of the Indian town. The traders — of whom there had been but very few in the whole region, each always in great isolation, none of whom had now returned except Jock Lesly — were allowed by the Indian municipal authorities, so to speak, the "second men," the choice of erecting dwellings at a little distance from the towns or in their midst, if this were deemed to conduce to the greater safety of the white inmates of the house, thus under the immediate protection

of the headmen of the village, for whose behoof the trader was licensed. The Indians being often at war with other tribes, especially the northern savages, this method of hovering under the wing of the Cherokee strength, both civil and martial, commended itself to the prudence of the trading folk. But the aspect of the little Scotch home, with all its suggestions of exile, devoid of a loophole within or a palisade outside, with no defense save the uncertain faith of the red savages who swarmed through the surrounding village, was pathetic in its isolation, its unique dissimilarity, its effect of captivity.

A vine, only a trumpet vine, hung luxuriant over the eaves and sent tendrils astir above the lintels of doors and windows. Shining pans were suspended to take the air and the sun against the posts of the porch. Piggins, crocks — blue, brown, and yellow — ranged themselves in vaunting cleanliness on a window shelf outside the sill. Motherly hens pecked about the steps, and a coop of slats, built in the form of a peak, restrained the activities of one who might have led too far a brood of the newly hatched, mere balls of fluffy brown and yellow down, endowed with motion, that flickered in and out of the crevices. Often in her gray-green dress the golden haired Lilius sat here at her homely flax wheel, while in the "beloved square" a company of braves were marshaling for a northern expedition against the Shawnees, singing their war-songs, painted for the war-path, the fullest expression of the terrible upon which the eye might rest. Sometimes there would be races or exhibitions of strength in the game of "ball play," when hundreds would assemble from other towns to witness these diversions. The visitors, lured by the report of something uncommon at the trader's dwelling, would come after the more exciting events of the day and stand outside and gaze upon her with insatiable curiosity. They would watch the revolutions of the whirling wheel and the flying

thread. Her deft white hand, her unfamiliar, smiling face, her strange, golden hair were all points of interest. They would listen to the whir of the spinning and the vague sound of her voice, as she hummed low a weird old song which she often sang about a "gyre-carline" and her witch-like doings of "lang syne." The men expressed no surprise, it being a point of honor with the Indians to have known all things always. They would invariably turn away without a word or a sign. Not so the women! The fashion of attire it was that served in an instant to denationalize them. From silent amazement they passed to whispered comments as they stood in buzzing groups; then to open questions; to shrill exclamations; to an unmanly yet kindly frenzy of inquisitiveness. Sometimes a girl would step gingerly forward, touch the slipper and the stocking on the slender foot,—then fall back with a hysterical twitter of mingled delight and ridicule. The vagaries of the mode, as it was understood in Charlestown, the fashion of the white kerchief about the shoulders of Lilias, the pleated folds of her dress, were of endless interest to the young Cherokee coquettes, and kept them grouped long about the porch, and Lilias's pink and white dimples continually playing in her cheek.

Somehow this curiosity concerning her was displeasing to Laroche. He wished Lilias were at home in Carolina. This was no place for the rooftree and the ingleside. He always distrusted the savages' protestations of peace and professions of friendship. He was happier when they were all gone and the little spinning wheel with its tuft of flax stood close by the window in the "spence," as the Scotch household called the living-room. There the puncheon benches and the "creepies," as the stools of blocks of wood were dignified, had a gossiping way of clustering around the hearth of flagstones, where an ember was always kept alive in the great chimney place, being renewed night and

morning, as a fire was deemed salutary for the invalid. Its glamour held gay Tam Wilson loitering there as long as the little wheel whirled and the green shadows of the newly leaved trees without flickered across the sunshine of her hair. Sometimes her knitting needles clicked and shimmered in the firelight. Sometimes she compounded and stirred with a long spoon and a burning red cheek the contents of saucepans for his behoof, then laughed with frolicsome scoffings at the celerity with which he disposed of them. He and the two Scotchmen exchanged experiences and argued on political or religious themes, and throughout Tam Wilson supported his character with a verisimilitude that would have won him credit in the histrionic profession, and like the others took in good part the trenchant remarks having a personal application with which she saw fit to comment. He fell into the habit of holding the skeins of yarn while she wound the thread for her knitting. So adroit and persistent was he in thrusting himself forward for this duty that he almost supplanted the young Highlander whose coveted boon it had been. Indeed Callum MacIlvesty openly sulked, taking no blame that he was the slower or the more inexpert swain of the two in the proffer of assistance. And so far had the identity of Tam Wilson submerged that of the diplomat, the soldier, the ambassador, that he felt a great and irrelevant joy in the sight of the young Highlander, thrown back on the opposite settle, each arm extended at full length along its back, his eyes fixed dully, blankly, on the rafters, that he might meet no glance of Lilius to win him from his just displeasure, his long, muscular legs stretched out to the fire, his plaid, his sporran, his belt, his kilt, — mentally designated “*ses jupons*” by Laroche, — all in unpicturesque and careless disarray. So painful to Callum was the spectacle of the dual industry that one day, unable to endure it longer, he sprang up to leave the house, encountering Jock Lesly at the door, where his horse stood saddled.

"Are ye gaen aff enow?" he interrogated Callum. "I am na willin' to leave the house wi' Liliias."

"Oh, Tam is there," replied Callum impatiently. "An' I am na goin' further than the spring," — which was scarcely ten steps from the door.

"Sae lang as there's twa men about," said her father, and he rode off on his errand.

But Liliias had overheard Callum's first phrase and no more, and Tam Wilson's quick ears were hardly less alert. Her face turned crimson. The young Scotchman had won much sincere gratitude and a very tender appreciation of his interest in her by his instant expedition to join her in her journey hither to her father's rescue from the small-pox, a disease then so dreaded, his adequate, thoughtful measures for her safety and protection, and yet the swift forwarding of the succor she brought. Odd that a thoughtless phrase could work such wreck! It was but a fancy, a freak that had taken him, she said to herself. She had thought too much of it, rated its significance too high. As for the distance, the danger, the fatigue — were the men not all and always loup ing hither and thither through this wild country, like the ranting, gangrel chiel s they were, where five hundred miles seemed a less journey to them than fifty at hame in the gude po' shay. He came wi' her because he maun aye be ganging — and now he was content to commend her to the protection o' Tam Wilson. She wad na gainsay him. She was not seeking Callum MacIlvesty or his help, good sooth! Tam Wilson was a welcome substitute for his presence and guard.

She held her head high and proud on her delicate, white neck. Her eyes, half cast down on the skeins as she disentangled the thread, glowed and flashed, and Tam Wilson, the personification of demure mischief, gazed discerningly at close quarters at them. Her sensitiveness was the keener for the fact that Callum on his father's side, the MacIlvestys,

was kin to "gret folk," and the relationship of Jock Lesly and his daughter to the young Highlander's mother was so distant as to baffle any ordinary computation, despite their pride in the fact and its frequent mention. At that time in the colonies women were few and much in the ascendant, and Lilius Lesly felt all the importance of her position and the strength of her power to make Callum rue the slight if he really cared aught for her, and to show him her own indifference if he cared naught.

Tam Wilson, in his idleness, his enforced inactivity, had developed a domestic proclivity. He was seldom out of the house, and as the days wore on the desire to go vanished. He was promoted to many domestic duties. He was permitted to stem the wild strawberries that graced the evening meal, and felt a stealthy joy to be berated that he should be so slow, and to be accused of taking toll of the fruit too heartily to solace his labor. It was he who went back and forth in pride to the spring with the pail, who was set to guard the bannocks that they did not burn, and when all was done who lounged on the settle and idly watched her smilingly lay the cloth that he might dine. It was he who beguiled the tedium of the sudden storms in the spring evenings when the clouds shut out the stars and the door shut out the mists and the roof rang with the marshaling of the hosts of the rain and the wind sang like a trump. Then Tam Wilson would stir the fire and tell wonderful stories and sing songs — military songs, gay clashes of the cannikin, and stories of the camp and the field, showing a knowledge so intimate as to cause the lowering Highlander to ask suddenly one night, —

"Ye hae seen service, sir?"

"Aye, sir," answered Tam Wilson, instantly on his guard. "Foreign service, sir, some years ago. I was at Hastenbeck in '57, sir, fighting with the Duke of Cumberland."

Which was true, but as one of the victorious French, and

not, as the phrase implied, among the defeated allied forces of the famous English commander.

"And two years later," Tam Wilson continued with less animation, "I was at the battle of Minden. I have participated in several campaigns."

Having thus unwittingly enhanced his rival's consequence, the young Highlander asked no more, but fell back to lower savagely and bite his lips, as perhaps an outward figure of how he was eating his own heart within.

But it was the glamour of the clear vernal moon that bewitched the unstable Tam Wilson, himself with as many phases. He would fall suddenly silent, as under a spell, when its rays aslant, just discerned, would drop down through the window from the west, where it hung little more than a crescent in a pink haze, and draw the outline of a leaf of a chestnut oak, an acorn half developed, and a bare twig upon the rugged puncheon floor of the spence. The girl's fair face would be vague, ethereal; her hair dimly a-glimmer; her white homespun dress of linen a poetic suggestion in the gloom; her rich voice full of undreamed-of vibrations that he could study with a quickened perception lacking in the bold light of day. The ember faded to ashes; the candles, with the canny Scotch thrift, were not lighted, since the moon lent a torch; the sense of home, of simple, domestic habitudes, was in abeyance with the eclipse of the visible exponents. With its sights and sounds annulled, the abstract interpretations prevailed. The mind rose to loftier conceits. One felt the forces of life—not merely living; the endowment of absolute entity—not sheer individuality, with its limitations, its crippled past, its doubtful, hampered, anxious future. The wind stirred the foliage without and reminded one of the wilderness, the vastness of the world that was made for man; the spring floods of the Tennessee River lifted a voice into the air and thundered primeval truths.

Through this window they could see the mountains — far,

near, always in massive majesty. Now a pearly, opalescent mist would glimmer among the domes with the witchery of the moon, and again after it had sunk the skies would be clear and densely instarred. Once a planet, so brilliant as to annul all lesser glories, showed through a great chasm, whose rugged, craggy slopes seemed illuminated in the surrounding gloom with a weird, unaccustomed luster, so different from the familiar light of the moon was the quality of the radiance shed by a star alone. Poetry was in the night — no lyric, no vague, murmurous rune, but with a splendid majesty of rhythm, with an epic grandeur and a meaning of awe that might be felt by the pulses of the heart and suggested to the brain — baffling language, never to be set forth in the paltry medium of mere words.

In differing degrees they all felt its influence, perhaps. Jock Lesly, smoking his pipe with an assiduity which he had learned from the Indians, talked, it is true, but casually, fragmentarily ; and Callum heeded enough to respond in kind, with sedulous care for the respect he always maintained toward his host and far awa' kinsman, but often the matter and manner of his replies showed that thought and heart were not in them. For the others they were silent, save now and again at long intervals a murmur of assent or negation, — a dangerous silence, instinct with a meaning no words might adequately interpret. As one night succeeded another and the moon waxed to fuller splendors and all the woods without were pervaded with that magic sheen which showed such silvery vistas in the dark umbrageous forest, which idealized the aboriginal architecture of Ioco, which made the feathered head and straight form of an Indian passing now and again adown the bosky ways of the woodland town so meet, so apt an incident of the picture, even the Europeans felt an irking in walls and restraint and longed for the freer air, a moonlight stroll, to stand unbonneted beneath the zenith.

"Eh — the wearying wa's!" exclaimed Lilius one evening, her elbow on the sill of the window and the moonlight in her upturned eyes, with all the wistfulness of a prisoner in their sweet longing. "How thae flowers scent the air!"

"Whist — whist — bairn; oh fie! Ye maun bide here," said her father in gentle reproof. "The moon will last our time. They'll hae the moon yet in the lift at Charles-toun, an' gowans to pu', I'se warrant, by the time we get there."

What was this pang in Tam Wilson's unmannerly heart! He dared not, even in his most remote consciousness, attribute its pain to the French officer, the Sieur de La-roche. And even as the Virginia drover and herdsman he affected to be, did he expect Jock Lesly to keep his daughter here indefinitely? He was almost stunned by the discovery of the sentimental anguish occasioned him by the mere idea of her withdrawal from his sight. He wondered now, however, since his mind was drawn to the subject, that as the object of her wild-goose chase — her father's supposed illness — was removed she had not already returned. So vital an interest he felt that he was moved to steady his voice, which — oh, how preposterously — trembled in the first words, to ask of her father a definite question concerning her departure, albeit his inquisitiveness in his host's family affairs ill accorded with his position as a guest laden with many favors. And in fact the query gave rise to some embarrassment.

"The lassie might hae gane back at once," Jock Lesly said, "but" — taking his pipe out of his mouth and glancing cautiously over his shoulder at the dusky room, still in the brown shadow, although the light of the moon lay in a broad silver square on the floor, so high had it climbed into the sky — "but" — evidently he hardly dared to put his prudence into words; only fragmentarily he explained that Callum and he had agreed that it would be injudicious to

suggest the idea of fear or flight by leaving Ioco earlier than was the custom every spring. The Indians—"thae dour deevils"—so delighted in the terror they inspired that they could scarcely refrain from the exercise of its power. The little guard could be easily taken, overcome; and mischievous malice, originating perhaps with the mere intention of giving them a fright, might with the realization culminate in a massacre. The journey was fraught with much peril at best. The Indians always requited every grudge with the utmost rigor, and certainly to pass by those blackened charred skeletons of towns in the ashes of Grant's fires, still tenantless for the lack of hands to rebuild them, would be a pertinent reminder. The bones of cattle and horses were bleaching along the watercourses. Other and human bones were even yet being slowly gathered from the débris of the battlefields, or on the site of remote hand-to-hand conflicts, and identified and conveyed to the town of their nativity, till one was forever in danger of stumbling on communities in all the gloom of funeral ceremonies when no death was recent—oh, there were grudges on every hand to claim requital, and the Cherokees never considered the identity of the individual who had wrought disaster.

Whereas, Jock Lesly reasoned, if Lilius remained here until the usual time of his semiannual pilgrimage to Charlestown, with all his force of packmen and pack-horses, laden with buckskins for the exchange of British goods, any demonstration on the pack-train would be associated with injury to the trade, the interests of which the Cherokees were always solicitous to conserve; hence it was hardly to be anticipated. The murder of an unofficial party, so to speak, would create scant stir; but an assault upon the pack-train of a licensed trader in his semiannual passage through the country would paralyze the trade for years to come, and necessitate investigation and retribution at the hands of the government.

And this result, the paralysis of the trade and the disaffection of the Cherokees, was precisely what that scheming Laroche had come to the town of Great Tellico on the Tennessee River in the earnest hope of compassing for the French interest. Had he been as true to it as he was accounted, he said to himself, he might have found means to promote this emprise of pursuit and capture and massacre. But it was with the sentiments that properly appertained to Tam Wilson that he perceived the wisdom and applauded the prudence of the proposed course. He resented that Callum MacIlvesty should have aught of weight in these councils, and began to grudge him, with all a lover's niggardliness, the poor boon of having been her escort hither, and the torment of anxiety Callum must have experienced in his prayerful care in planning for her safety, and his generous courage, prepared to spill the last drop of his blood in her defense.

“That’s why we no keep the door open after dark,” Callum briskly explained. “The Injuns are used to seeing the door closed in winter, an’ they’ll no wonder we hae only the window open now, an’ dinna gae abroad.”

“An’ that’s why lassie Lilius hings here at the window sill, as wishfu’ as ony hempie ahint the bars at a tolbooth,” her father said, reaching out his hand and passing it over the sheen of her golden hair. “I’m thinking, Callum lad, its thae lint-white locks — the bairn’s tow head — that aye gars the Injuns stare. Mind how auld Moy Toy stretched his big black een ?”

“Moy Toy ?” said Laroche, with a sudden wrench at his heart. He felt as one might, long ago sold to the devil, at the abrupt reappearance of the fiend. “When was he here ?”

“When ye were ailin’, lad. And now I come to think of it, the devil’s no sae black as he’s painted, an’ forbye, no sae red.”

He chuckled as he placed the long stem of his pipe in his mouth and talked on languidly as he drew at it. "The creatur seemed kindly, an' wearyin' to see you."

Tam Wilson could have fallen from the settle.

"An' when we wad na let him at ye on no account to speak till ye, he begged he might hae ae look at ye, an' when he drew the bed curtains and he had just a gliff, he was satisfied, an' went awa cannily enough."

So it was no vision that Laroche had remembered amidst the disjointed phantasmagoria of his delirium. In terrible reality this red savage, with whom he shared the hidden, subtle scheme of the French government against the Carolina colonies and trading interests, had come to his bedside and sought through the mists of his wandering perceptions to sign to him, to promise silence, to counsel secrecy. More distinct than aught else of the images of his fevered brain had been the presentment of that feathered head, that many-lined, keen-featured face, the white curtain in the firm grasp, the intent, warning eye, the finger, mysterious, menacing, laid upon the long, flat, compressed lips. More distinct — since it was real.

Alack ! of what avail the gay snatches of a soldier's song ; the tales of the tented field ; the kind, sweet, homely present of this simple cotter life ; the uplifting awe of nature that must needs follow that fine sweeping of the horizon line of mountain crest against the blue ; the breath of the aromatic woodland ; the mystery, the magic of the moon ; the sheen of the girl's golden hair — Laroche could not escape his doom. The past laid imperative hands upon the future. The reminder of Moy Toy left him the realization that there was no choice. Moy Toy had come — he would come again, bringing cogent influences of the Franco-Cherokee scheme, the political promises, the actuality of identity, and all a subordinate's thraldom to the will of an official superior.

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Moy Toy came indeed the next day and laden thus. In fact it was he who had first thought of the design of falling on the trader's pack-train on their return trip to Charlestown and cutting them all off. Thus, he argued, the country would be rid at one blow of the trade, — for the others, here, there, everywhere, would never return, — and it was the trade, the paltry bauble, that had bought the Cherokees, scot and lot, alienated them from their own best interest, threatened them with vassalage to the British, and with national annihilation. The vengeance of the Carolina authorities would scarcely discriminate, scarcely even seek out so elusive a prey as the immediate offenders ; frantic and furious it would alight like a bolt from heaven on whatever lay within its orbit. Thus it would serve to unite the upper Cherokees, the Ottare district, and the Ayrate towns in their own defense — the doubting must needs be steadfast, the weak-hearted confident and strong, the politic might scheme only from ambush, and Atta-Kulla-Kulla postpone his strategic talks of statecraft till the council once more should have time to heed his plotting and counterplotting. Then the way of the French would be open. Then might its skilled officer bring the great guns and build the forts and drive forever from the Cherokee borders this perfidious foe who sought to enslave a free people by goods and rum, at ruinous great prices and tolls of trade.

Despite Laroche's experience of the inconsistencies and contradictory traits of the Indian character, this precipitancy surprised him. He began to see that the patience with

which the savages were credited, their long waiting and scheming for revenge, the illimitable distances they traversed in war, the innumerable shifts and devices they practiced, of almost inconceivable ingenuity, to attain their object—all were exerted only when it lay beyond their immediate reach. Once within the possibilities, and the leap to seize upon it was like a panther's, as swift, as bloodthirsty, and as unreckoning. For the Indians' policy of doubting and debating was only when impotence held their revenge in bounds. Thus it was that their hasty, unguarded, impulsive seizing upon an opportunity of massacre and robbery so often recoiled upon the body politic, which suffered as a whole in the vengeance of the colony, the withdrawal of the trade, and the cutting off of supplies and ammunition, for the murderous enterprise of some small band. More than once Moy Toy himself, both earlier and later, headed a party of these independent warriors, for whose deeds the Cherokee nation at large paid the reckoning.

It was well that Laroche had the futility of such raids in mind to point the moral of the value of delay, of preparation, of acting with due caution for the attaining of permanent effect. Press the British back for a moment—that full-armed, embittered, more powerful still, they might again overrun the Cherokee country! And thus bring to naught the plans of the great French father to aid and abet the throwing off of this heavy yoke—all these plans as yet in abeyance,—not a cargo of ammunition *en route*.

“I care naught for the desertion of the base Mingo Pushkoosh; it is to me but the freak of a peevish child, as his very name implies,” Laroche declared. “The Choctaws are ever loyal to the French; the Muscogees, and their subordinate tribes, all are in amity, all preparing for the great decisive blow, the simultaneous attack that shall some day drive the English colonists east and south into the Atlantic ocean and the Mexico gulf. But the moment must be pro-

pitious — the occasion ripe. Time, Moy Toy, time is the great warrior. Time always wins the long fight."

He had walked out with the Indian, who had declined Jock Lesly's invitation to light his pipe at the hearth in the spence, this being unsanctified fire, kindled by no cheera-taghe, and had repaired to the fire always alight in the centre of the "beloved square," annually kindled by the men of the divine fire, distributed amongst the dwellings, and never suffered to die out till the last day of the old year. The necessity had occurred to neither of the two men as a subterfuge, but both eagerly embraced the opportunity that they might speak apart — Moy Toy to communicate his scheme, and Laroche to contend with it.

The spot was solitary at the moment. Rain was threatening ; a great slate-tinted cloud hung above the darkly green mountains in tantalizing suspension, seeming weighted and surcharged with water above the drought-smitten corn-fields. Day after day they waved with the delicate, newly sprouting blades, rustling and lisping in the capricious breaths of the wind, but showing a far-spread yellow tint beneath murky, purple glooms. Day after day the impending storm passed ; the lightning that had rent the heavens with a stroke like a flashing blade, and a thunderous crash as of the rivings of a world asunder, subsided to an aimless flicker with a vague and distant rumble. The purple-black clouds of weighted portent would grow of lilac hue, and presently one might see the tint of the blue sky through the fleecy dispersal of their folds. The wind rushed down from the mountains ; the sun shone out ; the cornfields lay parched and sere ; and the heart of a farmer of that day and generation differed in nowise from one of the present, albeit more than a century apart in time and of an alien race. Fortunately the laws now are kinder, and the weather prophets are fended from the wrath of him who plants and does not gather, who sows and does not reap,

because of the rain that is vainly promised and the thunder-head that deludes and deceives. The cheerataghe of Ioco Town were playing in very hard luck. The luring of that particular storm down upon these fertile fields along the Tennessee River devolved immediately upon them, and although the tribesmen were assured that the failure was to be attributed to the wickedness of their own hearts and their frequent misdoings, a farmer at odds with the weather is the least amiable of the brute creation, and there was an unmistakable tendency to retort the fault upon the lack of skill of the cheerataghe.

Moy Toy cast a glance of indifferent interest at the group at the further side of the square (recent rains had fallen at Tellico, long, soft, satisfying — what is now known as a "season"), where the cheerataghe of Ioco were plying their invocations and spells, surrounded by a number of the agricultural sufferers and several of the second men; their plumed heads and scantily covered, copper-tinted bodies were all distinct in the weird, dun light under the purple cloud, and against the white and gray fleckings of the tortuous river, and the pallid expanse of the wilting corn. No one was alert to listen to what might pass between Moy Toy and the foreign white man. What would a drought-harassed farmer of that region to-day care for issues of diplomacy if he fancied he had a chance of working a charm on the weather!

"Will there be enough of the powder?" Moy Toy asked tentatively. His experience was limited, but he knew enough of the world to be aware of the folly of exchanging a small certainty for a large possibility — a small massacre for a large war of doubtful outcome.

"Powder!" exclaimed the soldier with a scornful laugh. "I can teach you to make powder! The country is full of the materials for its manufacture."

With the keen observation of the scientist and the alertness

of a schemer to turn every incident to account, he had taken note in his short stay of the nitrous caves of the country, of its resources for sulphur, of the infinite growths of dogwood and of willows along the streams to furnish the requisite grade of charcoal. In later wars these yielded their benefits to discerning labor, but even so early Laroche fully appreciated these opportunities and projected thus using them.

Moy Toy, standing on the opposite side of the sacred fire, gazed at him for one moment in blank wonderment, the curiously wrought stone pipe in his hand, slipping through his nerveless fingers, shattered unheeded on one of the steatite rocks that supported the fire. And he—Moy Toy, the fool, the madman, but for an accident, a mere trifle—would have laid in ashes this fine brain with its curious workings, its many shifts, its convolutions of knowledge that exceeded the wisdom of all the men he had ever known from far or near,—all would now be a mere cinder, the sport of the wind, all lost to the Cherokee nation and the aggrandizement of the great chief, Moy Toy! With the recollection he became anxiously apprehensive. That night—that night of woe, while the slaughtered braves were laid in their hasty graves, and the prisoner awaited their fair passage to a world beyond in a bitter suspense that was to inaugurate and augment his destined tortures—would the memory of those anguished hours, guarded on the summit of the high mound, move this Frenchman to withhold aught of this vital, this all-important, this intensely coveted knowledge from the Indian warriors? Moy Toy's mental attitude, wistful, repentant, propitiatory, was distinctly meek, as intently listening he stared at Laroche, who was a trifle surprised at his agitation.

“Being a warrior, a soldier, I have learned many things, Moy Toy, that you would like to know, during my service as an officer of engineers and artillery,—and that would be of help to you against the English.”

One could hardly say how many months of work had gone into the fashioning and polishing of that pipe, a fine bit of carved stone, a unique specimen of aboriginal art, shattered on the ground, but Moy Toy's fingers were unconscious that it had escaped them.

He essayed some anxious phrases of apology.

They hardly knew what they did that night — surely they were sorely tried — an embassy received in peace and honor, and ending in a murder of unsuspecting and generous hosts — he feared Laroche had been inconsiderately treated, but prayed he would forgive the ignorance of the poor Cherokees, and help them against their foe.

The subtle Frenchman now stared hard at the subtle Indian.

“Oh,” Laroche said at last, airily, yet still at a loss, “you did the best you could, no doubt, in turning me over to the care of these white people who treated my ills in a way to which I and they are accustomed. No, no; although they are British the quarrel would have been had you persisted in keeping me at Tellico.”

Moy Toy shut his mouth so suddenly that his tongue was in some sharp danger from his teeth. Evidently by reason of his delirium Laroche had forgotten the aggressions upon his liberty, the length and torment of his captivity, the preparations for his torture and death in satisfaction of the crimes of his Choctaw colleague. The happy fantasy! The blessed fever!

“There is one boon I shall exact for the service I have already rendered you,” Laroche continued, seriously, weightily. “It is my pleasure to ask it, yet it is also your interest to grant it, and as a pledge of the future. I jeopardized my interest and promotion, I braved the wrath of Mingo Push-koosh, that a woman's life — your sister's life — should not be placed in peril. Much evil came of this, — but *I* risked most.”

Moy Toy, gazing fixedly at him, thought he little knew how much he had risked.

"And now," continued Laroche, "I ask in return a safe conduct for another woman — the daughter of the Scotch trader."

He paused with some sudden impediment of speech, his eyes seeming lighter, clearer than their wont, cast upward at the lowering storm cloud.

"This British family have saved my life by their care, and I owe them their lives in recompense. They must go in safety, but — I promise you" — once more that sudden hiatus in his fluency — "they shall not return."

He was not as observant as usual, or he must have discerned some extreme and secret joy beneath Moy Toy's calm exterior. That unique and quaint phenomenon of knowledge so delighted the crafty Indian! — that he should hold the key of incidents of great import in the experience of this man who was himself unconscious of them! And in the excess of his relief that Laroche remembered naught of his cruel perils, averted by a mere accident, the chief could have cried out in sheer, inarticulate joy. But he said, quite simply, that Laroche was his best beloved friend, whose injunctions should be obeyed, that he loved every hair on his head, that he should never forget the rescue of his sister, which, indeed, he felt he should have remembered earlier, for it was his nephew who should be his heir and hold the sway of Great Tellico.

"The life of the trader's daughter, her safety, and the safety of all the trader's household I demand for that service," Laroche repeated solemnly. "And as it is assured to them so will I requite you. I will promise you then all the aid that mind and heart and hand can give you hereafter. I swear it."

Moy Toy renewed his protestations of friendship and reiterated his apologies. The tone and tenor of his remarks

implied acquiescence, and Laroche felt no lack. But Moy Toy looked after him cynically as he took his way back toward the dwelling of the trader, for the first large drops of the impending storm were falling slowly through the air. A breathless cry, like a gasp, went up from the rain enchanters at the other side of the square; then ensued silence, tense, expectant, painful. The farmer, poor sport of the skies, was aware that this limited manifestation of the obedience of the powers of the air rescued the reputation of the cheerataghe, since rain had fallen at their bidding, yet did not save the crop, and, reduced to the position of the only sufferer in the event, hung in desperate suspense upon the developments of the next few moments.

The trading-house, with its door broadly aflare, giving a glimpse of an orderly assortment of merchandise within, had on the roofless porch or platform a group of the young packmen who had accompanied Callum MacIlvesty from Charlestown. They were wearying for their return thither, since so many restrictions had been laid on their conduct and language, lest they give offense to the Indians and bring down reprisal while they had in their keeping the precious charge of the young lady, "little lassie Liliias," as auld Jock loved to call her. This restraint greatly irked them, for they were accustomed to giving and receiving hard knocks, speaking their minds without fear or favor and with a very rough edge to their tongues. One, fallen a trifle ill, declared that he would be well in a trice if he were not "just dying of all these manners!" Sodden themselves in a thousand superstitions, they had taken a keen interest in the weather bewitchments, in which, from these motives, they had been forbidden to mingle. They had neither the time nor the inclination to notice the invalid hastening away out of the rain to shelter, but his disordered step, his pallid countenance, his agitated mien did not fail altogether of observation. The door of the dwell-

ing opened as he approached it, and there stood Lilius holding it against the wind. So incongruous seemed her fair face and golden hair and whitely glimmering attire with the sullen aspect of the approaching storm, the gloom-darkened woods on every hand, that she suggested an affinity with a sunlit scene that glimmered along the far perspective of the ranges where a rift in the cloud admitted a suffusion of ethereal golden light, in which the mountains were azure, the woods of a fine, intense jade hue, the flash of a cataract like molten silver, — the very apotheosis of scenery, some transient glimpse of the fair land of Canaan.

Laroche's lip trembled as he looked at her — so beautiful, so good, so cruelly endangered.

She noticed his pained expression, but misunderstood its meaning. With the constant household anxiety as to his health — “Ye hae been lang awa wi' that dour carle, Moy Toy, an' ye look pale. Set ye down by the fire, an' I'll gie ye a posset, before the others get here to beg for tae half o' it.”

He loved to do her bidding, even if it were not blended with many odd “sups an' bites,” of a quality peculiarly acceptable to an invalid's capricious appetite. He would have drunk poison as readily for her sake, he said to himself, and added with a grim smile that he might do that yet. For he had come to a full realization of late. He consciously recoiled from all his loyal plans, his secret orders, his duties, his pride of intellect, of achievement, his past, his profession, his future. He said to himself that he would have liked the life of a poppet — he could have felt if he had been made of wood or wax — to be placed thus in a corner ; to gaze at her with unwinking eyes ; to be given a bowl of drink, withdrawn in a minute, as she must needs test with her own lips whether it were not too hot. He sought with sedulous care the section of the rim her lips had touched. Poison ! but the cup of the present held

nectar! He would have been satisfied — would have kissed the hand of fate had he been only her pet dog.

A great collie, old, cosmopolitan, — he had come across on the ship with her father in the days “lang syne,” and exceedingly surprising did he find the experience of a collie of degree on the ocean, — had deserted the trading-house, since her arrival, repudiated his master, forgotten his friends, the packmen, cut his Indian acquaintance dead, to lie by her hearth, to follow her footsteps, to feed from her hand, to sit with his head against her knee and his listless body, dislocated, weighing against her, to whine in jealous disfavor and an effort to attract her attention had she more than a sentence or two to exchange with any interlocutor save him.

“ Whist, whist, hinny,” — she would gently smite his lolling head — “ ye ’ll talk soon, and then I ’ll ken ye ’re no canny ! ”

For this, even so little as this, Laroche felt at times that he would barter his learning, his prospects, his identity, his duty. Sometimes he sought to justify his long, unnecessary lingering here, despite his consciousness of the fact that his very individuality was a dangerous secret. Were it known or suspected that he was employed in the French interest, he could not hope to escape arrest, and thereby injury to the cause he represented. Whatever might be the will of personal friends, should he retain them in the stress of these disclosures, hard usage would he encounter at the hands of the British colonial authorities — perhaps even death ; nay, had there not been a reward offered for the scalp of every Frenchman busy among the Indians ? And certainly in such an adverse development he could not count on the adhesion of the fickle Cherokees, especially to their detriment ! But for this one rift in his loyalty, he was wholly devoted to the Louisiana interests which he had so zealously sought to advance. This — this was his own personal beguilement. He would have

known how to resist his wonted allurements, — the pride of intellect, the pampered independence and security of life, the world, the flesh, and the devil. He was full armed against them ; the attack would have been met by hardy resistance along those lines. But to divert him from his duty, his loyalty to his political trust, his obedience to his officers by means of a virtuous attachment to a being so gentle, so fair, so good that “no man could think on evil seeing her” — this seemed a device worthy of the devil, and very like him ; for this attachment would have done him honor in any station of life save this, harbored deep, deep in the subtle, deceitful heart of an enemy in the guise of a friend, a spy upon his benefactor, the destroyer of their simple and limited and humble prosperity.

Not so subtle as he thought — for now the schemer was but the man. Worse still, for his secret, he was a Frenchman. Sometimes as he looked at her those keen, eagle-like eyes of his softened suddenly, with his emotional French susceptibility, and filled with tears. These tears she saw, and in responsive emotion her own would start, trembling, to the eyelids. She was not used to the sight of tears in a man’s eyes. Callum MacIlvesty had not trafficked with such gear since he had first gotten afoot on his sturdy infant legs and began his long travels through this weary world. Sometimes, taking a pinch out of the proffered snuffbox of a merchant of degree in Charlestown, Jock Lesly, who could carry his liquor well enough, would find this unaccustomed gentility of the mull culminating in a sneeze and water in the eyes. But such tears as these of Laroche’s — tears of sheer pleasure, of subtle sorrow, of hopeless love, of the sweet emotion of looking upon her — she had not witnessed, and yet, enlightened by a kindred sentiment, she could appreciate ; and the difference of the manifestation for her sake from aught else she had ever known made it seem the deeper, the truer, the dearer.

Certainly it was more picturesque than the obvious signs of Callum's dissatisfaction in an unhappy love, though, to be sure, she took scant heed of them. When "ses jupons" swished out of the room in his swinging stride, she was cognizant neither of the cause nor the circumstance of his sudden taking of offense. And this brought slowly to his intelligence the fact that she was equally unmindful of his embarrassed return, as he sat glowering at Laroche across the fire, well aware that his watchful rival fully appreciated and rejoiced in the futility of his show of anger. Once, in awkward inadvertence, Callum stepped on the collie's tail, and the shrieks that the doggie sent up to high heaven would seem to imply that there was no other canine so ruthlessly afflicted in the universe. Liliias rebuked MacIlvesty's carelessness in a tone which conveyed genuine indignation, and he could only protest in a gruff monosyllable; while the beast, leaning against her knee, causelessly sobbing for half an hour, would burst forth in a plaintive yelp whenever his eyes met Callum's, and her "Whist, hinny, whist" had all the adverse sentiment that might have been expressed in an admonition, "I wad not tak ony notice o' him."

Callum could not even mend the fire with wonted deftness, nor keep his temper when the logs of wood would roll down, but would administer a kick of such free force as to send the red-hot coals flying about the puncheon floor and all the family scuttling to catch them up before the whole "bigging suld be in a low." Even in the assiduous comity of his conversations with Jock Lesly he often seemed to forget names of people and places in Scotland with which he was obviously familiar, and he was curiously uninformed of all calculated to interest the elder in the doings of the regiment. Sometimes, indeed, his sentence broke off in the middle, and he would fall into a reverie, from which he was only roused by the sudden jocu-

larly upbraiding voice of Jock Lesly, and once more with galvanic earnestness he would essay his method of propitiation. Matters went better with him when the simple and unobservant Jock Lesly himself did the talking, which was usually the case, in great fullness of detail and long, circuitous routes of narrative, leaving his auditor scant duty save to murmur "Ou!" "Ay!" "I'se warrant ye!" at intervals, these dicta being uncompromising and calculated to be generally applicable to any situation. His supplantation was definite and complete.

And still Laroche, despite his qualms of conscience, putting aside his repentance as for indulgence at a more convenient season, interpreted all the *indicia* of the young Highlander's state of mind, felt the complacence of a favored rival, and experienced all the joys of triumph over the poor young Callum, as if he had a full intention to enter a contest against him for this prize. True he was touched with the generosity of the young mountaineer, who had shown at the first some definite proclivity to inquire into the stranger's means as well as local habitation and association, but becoming impressed from some casual phrase with the idea that the guest was of meagre resources and had experienced much financial hardship, he withdrew all his forces along that line. The reverse, in fact, was the case, for Laroche's fortune was not inconsiderable and he enjoyed fair prospects. The error of his magnanimous rival elicited that æsthetic sentiment, that prepossession in favor of whatever is noble, which a certain type delights to admire rather than to emulate. It stimulated a degree of reciprocal interest in the young Highlander, — a sort of curiosity as to his status which comprised several incongruities. MacIlvesty's poverty was obvious, not merely from his humble estate as a foot-soldier, but often from allusions to it that escaped him. He had the manner of a gentleman of a high type, — he was lofty, yet not assuming; kind without condescen-

sion. He was often merry but never clownish, and by turns grave and dignified without affectation. Yet his education was most limited; he notably lacked the training appertaining to a certain social rank, while possessing all its other worthy attributes and inherent values; his experience of travel was the service of the Forty-Second, the troop ship, and the forced march of the wilderness.

Laroche, in his idle interest, had had an intermittent intention of inquiring directly of Jock Lesly concerning the inconsistency of the young Highlander's endowments and position, but the awkwardness of this display of sheer curiosity was obviated when one day the trader complained of a freak of taciturnity which he declared Callum had shown.

"I canna get muckle mair talk out o' Callum now than when he kenned naught but the Gaelic."

Then in reply to a question which seemed to express but a civil interest, "Ou, ay,—Callum was near grown when he had the meenister for a tutor, an' the callant got to his English. Ou, ay,—the family hae had hard straits,—but, wow, man! the clan were a' out in the Fifteen, an' then what was left o' them went out in the Forty-five!" Though not without sympathy, he spoke with obvious reprehension of this clan's misfortunes, for Jock Lesly was of the Lowland Scotch and had always been well affected to government. "An' they lost much blood, an' a head or twa amang them afterward,—an' a' the land was forfeited to the crown—there were twa or three titles amang them, a yerl an' a baronet or twa—I wot na what, but a' very fine—if it were not for the attainder. Callum is kin to gre't folk! But what's a title—neither fitten to eat nor to drink, I trow. I wad wuss, though, the callant did own the land that the government took away from his father,—wha died in hiding after the Forty-five,—an' the rents, that he might hae made a gentleman o' himsel' instead o' just a buirdly foot-sodger."

He was a gentleman even without the land or the rents, and the Frenchman piqued himself upon his subtlety of discernment in having perceived this fact in so untoward a guise as a "foot-sodger" who shoulders a musket for pay.

For these reasons now and again Laroche experienced a compunction that he should be destroying the prospect of the domestic happiness of this man, when circumstances — nay, his life was at stake! — forbade any serious intentions on his own part. And yet, and the thought was subtly sweet, she loved him — he was sure of it — as he loved her. But in the dark hours of the night, when the house was silent, all wrapped in slumber, a certain wakefulness had begun to harass him, like a Nemesis; a voice of reproof sounded in all his reflections, of warning, of presentiment, the prophecy of the future. When thus repentance and doubt fell upon him he would urge in extenuation that if he had idly won her heart it was but in the interests of that disguise still so imperative upon him. Yet the thought of their kindness was like coals of fire. They had brought him back from the verge of the grave. They had lavished their best upon him, the stranger, for aught they knew humble of station and penniless. Still, and it was the trifle that wrung his heart with the most poignant pang, the best room in the house was his; the graces of the bed curtains; the luxury of the sheets; the cleanly though rude furnishings; all the little comforts packed with the view of her father's illness, and brought so far through the toilsome wilderness, were for the guest.

The heavy snoring of Jock Lesly would echo from one of the rooms on the other side of the spence, but through the flimsy partition of the adjoining chamber Laroche could often hear the creaking cords of the bedstead as Callum MacIlvesty, sleepless too, flounced back and forth in the instability of his feather bed, restless, anxious, reviewing many trifles fraught with great moment to him, heartsore,

weary, and despairing. Laroche commiserated the young Highlander's sentimental anguish, but he had a sentimental anguish of his own, and he dwelt upon it in alternate pain and pleasure, in an ecstatic torment.

One night as he lay thus, pondering the events of the day, his attention was arrested by a stealthy step. He put his hand under his bolster and grasped the handle of his pistol. He listened hopefully for the stir of the tortured Callum MacIlvesty, but sleep at last and some fond and peaceful dream held the young Scotchman, and naught but the sound of his deep and regular breathing attested his proximity in the next room. Laroche hardly dared cry out and alarm the house, lest the impending demonstration be delayed and renewed at some moment when no one was awake and on guard. Except for the possibility of firing the building, it was in danger of no calamity that could fall upon it without noise. The doors were locked, the batten shutters had heavy bars; therefore he judged it prudent to wait and listen.

There came again the tread of feet, stealthy, quiet as before; the impact of a bare sole upon the ground beneath the window was distinct for a moment. In the blank interval that ensued he heard the continual rise and fall of the breathing of the night; the chiming and chanting of woodland cicada, in regular alternations; the rush of the Tennessee River dashing over the rocks. Once more that sound, as of a bare foot, and again beneath the window.

He was exceedingly deft and light and certain in all his movements; when it had passed he slipped out of his bed and crossed the room to the window, not a sound attesting his progress, save that once a puncheon creaked. He stood for a moment motionless, then peered through the rift between the shutter and the window.

Outside there was a glare—a sudden glare. He saw a figure so grotesque as to recall for a moment the associations

of his delirium ; then half a dozen figures came into view, all in Indian file, and strangely bedight. They were making the rounds of the house again and again, evidently working a charm. Perfect silence waited on their movements, save always beneath his window the stroke of a bare foot fell on a sleek and clayey space with that slight sibilance that gave him warning. Heads surmounted by torches enclosed in great gourds, hideously painted in the semblance of human faces, showed faces below still more hideously painted ; buffalo horns and tails adorned figures grotesquely and silently dancing ; others wore bears' claws and hides ; a human panther ran on all fours, now and again leaping so high into the air that he seemed some inconceivable triumph of mechanism instead of a living creature. The soldier felt his heart sink. Seldom did the Indians permit the presence of white strangers in their more national customs, and thus often the depths of their savagery, their fantastic barbarism, lay unrevealed. Some strange significance surely marked this grim pantomime, enacted in the darkest hour of the night about the silent dwelling, while its unconscious inmates slept. Their lives might seem to hang by a hair. He bethought himself, with a pang of terror, of the young packmen quartered in the attic of the trading-house—surely the glance of a wakeful eye must prelude the crack of a rifle, for could a sane man imagine this to be aught but the revelings of the creatures in the midst of an assault. But while he gazed in a terror he could hardly suppress yet dared not voice, in one instant, while the panther was in the mid-air trajectory of one of its wild leaps, every light was extinguished, every figure vanished ; and lurk and listen as he might for the impact of the bare foot upon the clayey soil which would intimate that in darkness the strange procession continued its rounds, he heard only the vague sighings of the melancholy woods, a creak once of the timbers of the house, and again the voice of the Tennessee River dashing against its rocks.

VI

THE next morning Jock Lesly positively refused to credit the reality of the remarkable procession that had thrice encircled his house while the dwellers within, all save one, had slept oblivious and unsuspecting.

His bushy eyebrows had drawn together in a big blond frown as he listened, his eyelids contracted over his narrowed eyes, but he shook his head when all was said.

“Na — na! — ye were dreaming, lad — just a bit of the fever on ye yet!”

The futility of the proceeding ; its lack of precedent in his experience ; the clear, fresh, reassuring presentment of Ioco Town under the vernal sky, so peaceful with the dewy matutinal woods hard by, the flashing river, the mountain ranges suavely blue ; the friendly denizens of the vicinage coming and going in and out of the trading-house ; the clusters of headmen about the buildings of the “beloved square,” perhaps discussing some point of interest in the cabin of the aged councilors, or playing the endless but trivial sedentary game of “roll the bullet” — all combined to discredit it ; all was as sane, as seemly as civilization itself, once adopt a different standard — how could it be aught but a dream !

But Laroche continued pale, anxious, distract.

“I thought I ought to tell you and Callum,” he said — the young men affected a friendly familiarity of address. “I know what I know ! It was no dream !”

Jock Lesly rubbed his hands together as he leaned forward with his wrists on his knees and looked up at the

younger man's face, with an expression of kindly but superficial gravity — obviously humoring, as he thought, a whimsy.

"If you have no objection, I should like to speak of it to Moy Toy," Laroche said.

"To no one else, then," said Jock Lesly, for he accounted himself a great proficient in the subject of Indian traits and manners. "The Injuns no like to be keeked at an' spied out when they are at their high jinks and fandanges. But Moy Toy 's a kindly soul an' friendly. I mind how he wearied to speak wi' ye while ye lay in a dwam when ye cam first to Ioco."

The instant the revelation passed the lips of Laroche, he saw by the change in the Indian's face that the disclosure was unexpected. Moy Toy, however, caught his features into their wonted stoical calm, and the flicker of expression was as sudden and as transient as the flash of light reflected from a bird's wing on a pool of sombre waters.

Then he replied casually, almost in the words of the Scotchman, —

"It was but a dream!"

"But, Moy Toy," urged Laroche, "dreams come true. All the Cherokee nation believe the dreams that visit the sleep of their 'beloved men.'"

The chief smiled with a sort of flouting contempt that the white man should thus place himself and his paltry sleeping fancies on the same plane with the "beloved men" of the great Cherokee nation and the eternal truths, the veiled face of the future, revealed to them in the sanctities of their priestly visions; he seemed angrier than even the presumption might warrant. The paleface, he declared, was not a Cherokee "beloved man," nor even an adopted tribesman. Why should Indian visions haunt his slumbers in the sincerities of truth? Then, once more visibly repressing some secret, rising agitation, he continued with

a specious smile, "I myself have firmly grasped your hand, and I do not speak with the lying lips nor the snake's forked tongue. I am Moy Toy ! But these Indians of the dreams — beware of them. They do not know you to be the best beloved friend of the Cherokee chief. They may cheat you and deride ! No man can lay hands on them — the dream Indians, — and this makes their lying tongue so strong to the paleface, even to the 'beloved man' of the French king. No Indian of the vision should delude you to the wreck of your peace of mind."

Laroche said no more, resolving that no Indian of the flesh should delude him, whatever deceptions might be wrought upon his senses by the immaterial Indians of dreams. He seemed to assent. No man could so fashion the guise of appearances to the similitude of fact. He laughed a little, with the suggestion of being a trifle out of countenance, a little ashamed of his confidences. Moy Toy, from being keenly observant, grew distract, and answered presently at random. At length, as if in justification of the foolish importance he had attached to his vision, Laroche declared that he had great interest in the significance of dreams, that he held them to be scenes, as it were, vouchsafed from the border world beyond, peopled by those who have once lived here, that he had always longed to be admitted to listen when he saw the "beloved men" grouped under a tree, or in the "holy cabin" of the "beloved square," telling their dreams to each other and conning their interpretations.

"And so you shall hear," Moy Toy interrupted, "when you are adopted into the Cherokee nation and made a great 'beloved man,' after you have taught us to manufacture the powder, the spirit of death that comes roaring and rushing with fire and smoke out of the mouth of the gun, sending the leaden bullet to work his will." He was still looking about with a preoccupied mien and eager eyes, and

suddenly he said that he must be gone for a space, as he had matters of some import to discuss with the headmen of Ioco Town, for he had been summoned from Tellico to meet them in their council-house.

The wary Laroche, as he cast his eye over the spaces of the town, noted that the headmen were presently being sought here, there, and everywhere, and that a very considerable interval elapsed before, congregated together, they repaired to the state-house ; he inferred from the fact that the meeting was no matter of previous arrangement, but altogether impromptu. The coming of Moy Toy had had about it all the *indicia* of a mere personal visit to him to make sure of the state of his health and the date of his possible return to Tellico, where he was likely to be hardly less a prisoner because he was so valued as a guest, the prospect of his services being held at so high a rate. The conclusion was irresistible ; the revelation of that vision of the dead watches of the night, which in his fatuity the Scotchman called a dream, and the Indian in his craft a delusion, had a significance, an importance that warranted the exertion of Moy Toy's great influence in the nation to summon into council the headmen of a town, not his own municipality, without the forms, the heralds, the preambles so habitually required and accorded.

What did it mean, this dream ? Oh for a soothsayer indeed ! — for an interpreter of the masked fact rather than the fantasy of fiction ! Laroche stood for one moment in despair, realizing that the lives of the trader's household hung upon the result of the debate now in progress in that strange, clay-daubed, dome-shaped temple, — upon the wild will of those malignant beings endowed, as it seemed to him, merely with the semblance of humanity and yet with the mental processes, the moral insanity, the malevolent spite of fiends. All was the more barbaric, the more unholy, the more unearthly, because of the recollection of the gro-

tesque features of that weird, silent circling and circling last night about the dwelling of their victims. Since that dwelling harbored her, of whom Laroche could not think save with a swelling heart, of whom he could not speak for the candor of words crowding to his lips which his embassy must disallow him, whom he could not thank for his life that he owed to her and hers, for gratitude was all inadequate, he must act, he must seize upon some device. And still he stood silent, inert, not knowing where to turn.

Was it as a penalty, he asked himself in sudden affright, that he was to be called upon to witness without recourse the destruction of this home, the hideous massacre of the hearthstone circle, to him now as the treasure of all the earth ? Would he, indeed, do no penance till the leisure he liked awaited him ? Was he to find what joy might be in the hugging of chains till he should choose to rouse his will and smite his soul free of its cherished shackles ? Was he, unscathed, to steep his consciousness in the intense, sweet delight of this selfish affection, pure doubtless, but because of the unimpeachable, unapproachable virtue and innocence of its object, and not because of any restraints exerted upon himself by the dictates of honor or manly faith or kindness and tenderness of heart, — he who knowingly, intentionally, had won her love for naught, to cast away again, had, perhaps, wrecked her happiness, had certainly supplanted the true, devoted, loyal man fitted and once destined to be her husband.

Had he expected to decree his own punishment for his idle cruelty when surfeited with the semblance of romanticism ? Beshrew his leniency ! — he had devised a light one ! To return to Great Tellico with an empty heart and a drear sense of separation from all on earth he loved ; to work at the behests of the government that employed him ; to obey the orders of his superior officers for which even morally he was not responsible ; to dwell in a sad pleasure

and a sweet pain upon the memory of a fair face, a tender parting word — had he thought to hold in the sanctities of his most secret heart the recollection of a kiss and tears of farewell ? This his prophetic vision had viewed as his unkind fate, — and he had sighed in the anticipation of this romantic woe !

He now stood aghast between his trivial fancy of the future and its harsh face coming so near that it seemed half revealed. Heaven, just heaven, mindful of retribution, would so smite him, insensible though he had become, that he should feel its wrath. Was the blow to fall on him through the woes of others ? Was he to see the brave and sturdy Scotch trader, so kindly and generous, suspicious of naught in his own open candor, smitten to the ground in his own house, gory, scalped, disemboweled, the gross flout of what once he was ? All a-tremble, Laroche asked of himself should he who had inflicted much keen pain in ingenious wise on his young rival be compelled to witness the keener tortures of the stake ? And how should he look on her golden hair that he had loved — save the mark ! — dabbled and dulled with brains and blood !

Laroche gave vent to a hoarse, inarticulate cry. For this, all this, would result from his deception and his long lingering here in the false guise of Tam Wilson. Had he returned to safety at Tellico the machinations of the French among the inconstant Cherokees must have been gradually divulged by the fact of his continued presence there, and his identity as an emissary of that government suspected ; thus this handful of British subjects, warned in time, would have taken prompt measures for their protection and have compassed their withdrawal from the country. The menace that now hung over them was his fault, the result of his treachery, his idle trifling.

He wondered if the fantastic threats of the previous night might be explained by the fact that the headmen of Ioco

Town were inflamed by the continued presence of the representative of the French government, the large splendor of his promises transmitted from one council-house to another, his secret mission to unify the tribes, organize and command their army. Were they already feeling their emancipation from the British rule; already emboldened by the knowledge of the great French king's strength, as if the promised munitions of war were in store; already rejoicing in the blood of their earliest victims, even while it yet coursed with calm pulsations through their veins?

Would heaven only in its omnipotent goodness avert the blow, turn the time back, halt the sun in its irresistible march! He laughed in a sort of bitter scorn that these miracles of mercy must needs be invoked to undo what he had so willfully done. Yet he must know the full measure of the menace — and once more the hideous, significant phantasmagoria of that mystic midnight magic pressed upon his quickened consciousness.

This was a keen brain, essentially the schemer's. Laroche was still standing near the spot where Moy Toy had left him. Close by, hitched to the bough of a tree, was the horse of the prince of Tellico, — a fine animal, bearing in his mien and form strong suggestions of his ancestors, the Spanish barbs. Though fiery he was as gentle, and he only reared with impatience and displeasure when the Frenchman, with a sudden thought, laid hold upon his mane, seeking to mount as usual from the near side. Remembering the habit of the Indians always to mount on the off side he was quickly in the saddle, and giving the spirited charger a cut with a whip to which it was unaccustomed he was out of the town like a flash and galloping at a breakneck speed along the trading path through the wild woods.

It was high noon at Great Tellico when he drew rein on the banks of the Tennessee River. Vernal languors were in the air; the richness of the waxing season embellished field

and forest, the velvet blue of the Great Smoky Mountains, the intense, almost violet hue of the sky, the redundancy of the flowering shrubs and the growth of the grass and weeds underfoot. The river in the recent drought had shrunken since he last had seen it, revealing here and there a stretch of fine, amber-tinted sand, and again a rugged, shelving ledge of rock, and yet again beds of muscle shells, numbers of which, opened and searched for the fresh-water pearls, lay riven apart, giving an opalescent shimmer to the casual glance and a whiter margin to the gray and glossy stream. The shadows were limited, yet dense, so clear was the exquisitely limpid and fresh mountain air. The sun was not warm, despite its splendid effusions, yellowing with an effect of burnished glamour, prophetic of ripening glories.

The Indians who had marked his arrival gathered in groups at a distance, now sheltered by a shrub or a stump, now by the corner of a house, occasionally peeping out at him in the covert way which they affected to ascribe to their consideration toward guests. For, said they, openly to study the mien and dress and person of a stranger savors of discourtesy, but unobserved to mark all his qualities from a screen gratifies the curiosity and gives no offense. In this instance they were influenced by interests far deeper than sheer curiosity. They were all well aware of his identity, the terrible fate for which he had been destined, his reprieve and transference to the British trading-station at Ioco, that by the European remedies to which his system was accustomed he might be cured of his strange fever, which had defied the skill and magic of the cheerataghe. For what purpose he had been reserved, however, whether for the torture when his unconsciousness should not rob it of half its terrors, or as a slave, or as a hostage, or other ulterior view of Moy Toy and the rest of the headmen, the rank and file were not informed. Therefore a very genuine sensation pervaded the several coteries as they marked the free,

independent air, the erect carriage, the easy, deft step with which Laroche, no longer splendidly arrayed in the dazzling French uniform, but always of a point-device effect, even bedight in buckskins, crossed the space in front of the mound where he had awaited his fate in such weary suspense and dread. Perhaps he might not have been able to maintain this valiant attitude if that hiatus of recollection had been once bridged over. The event had passed to him as if it had never been, and he sustained the gaze of the community as possessed of a unique interest, — a man who, but for an accident, might now have been, instead of a man, a handful of ashes, whirling about with no more substance or identity or cohesion of personality than the grains of sand strewn over the “beloved square.”

Laroche flung himself down upon the roots of the tree in front of the dwelling of Akaluka, and took off his coonskin cap to let the cool breeze refresh his throbbing temples. Akaluka, glancing suddenly out of the door, was startled to see him sitting there — startled and not pleased. She had had a great fright in the complication that had come so near to the bestowal of her in marriage upon the Choctaw chief, Mingo Push-koosh, who had slain in such grievous wise the unoffending braves of the town, whom he had found peacefully spreading their seines at the confluence of the Tennessee and the Tellico. Often with a morbid fascination she went to look at the spot where he had hung up “the war-brand,” a half-burnt stick swaying across the path, suspended by a grapevine — an open declaration of hostilities, according to the rules of Indian war. The cruel man! for as he had slain these he would have slain her; and the trouble all began with the “mad young men” who counseled the acceptance of the red scarf, and who cared for naught save that the Mingo should not be angered and that they should soon go to war again with the British. But they all blamed her, and they talked and talked with many sharp

words, and she was tired of all mad young men, who were a vain and a vexatious creation, and she wished to see none ever again, and here was one who had come and had laid himself at her very door, as she still stood, barely discerned in the depths of the cabin. Whereupon she lifted her voice in the extremity of her disfavor and asked him why he was not burned long ago.

The tenor of the question roused Laroche to his normal mental attitude.

Perhaps, he said with affected humility in his ignorance that this fate had seriously menaced him, it might have been that in view of the debt she owed him she had seen fit to intercede for his life. Hence he had not yet been burned.

This politic reply brought Eve at once to the door. "What debt?" she asked, in frowning curiosity.

Her face wore a strong expression of racial ferocity strangely incongruous with feminine physiognomy, which reminded Laroche of the singular fact that in the crisis of the most exquisite anguish of the torture, the women and children were permitted and rejoiced to flout and buffet and sear and cut and aggravate in infinite ingenuity the woe of the quivering victim. Even thus lowering however, she was not devoid of beauty, and her dress betokened still a heedful eye to the values of decoration. The wings in her glossy black hair were alternately the red of the cardinal bird and the modest brown of his demure little mate. Her doeskin *jupon* was also red, dyed deep with the blood-tinted madder-root. She had a great red sash, such as a pirate might wear or a major-general. Moy Toy had been constrained by many pleas and domestic tyranny, in a sort, to confer it upon her from the store of presents of the French pettiaugre in lieu of the scarf she had been bidden to restore to the Choctaw Mingo. She wore it like a voluminous cross-belt diagonally about her body, then passed around her slender waist. Here and there the silk had

come in contact with her smooth, anointed skin, and the unguents had streaked the sash with a darker hue. Around her neck, which the arrangement of the sash made visible, being disposed in what is now called a V shape, a string of white pearls lay against the clear olive tint of her throat — the gems were large and for the most part regularly shaped. She was stringing others, which had been pierced for the purpose with a hot copper spindle — a practice which the early traders sought to discourage — the application of the heat discolored the gem, diminishing its lustre, and spoiling its value for the European market. Her feet were bare, of an exquisite shape, small, slender, most delicately made. He had hardly dreamed that her narrow, liquid, velvet-black eyes, with lashes so long, so straight, they seemed to cast a shadow, could look upon any object with a stare so repellent, so infuriated, so brutal.

Before he could answer she asked another question, so dissimilar that he was at a loss and fumbled for a reply.

“Where is your hair?”

He had been accounted a logician, a mighty wrestler with arguments, even a subtle trickster with words, but his facility was never so alert that it could, without bewilderment, make a leap like this.

“Oh — ah — my hair? Oh — they took off my hair at the trading-station — for the fever, you know.”

“You look like a baby — a grown-up baby,” she said, surveying with objection his short ringlets.

“My hair is not like a wig. It will grow,” he said, with his gentle gayety.

“Your beautiful clothes are at the state-house,” she observed. “Tinegwa wears them at the dance.”

For his life Laroche could but change countenance. So is man, the civilized creature, artificialized by his need and custom of clothes that they seem actually a part of him. He felt the indignity as a personal affront, the more acutely

since he had not fully realized his danger after the desertion of him by Mingo Push-koosh. His eyes rested on the soft shining of her anointed sash.

"Then I shall wear them no more," he protested, with covert meaning. "Moy Toy and I," he resumed, hastening to cloak his sarcasm lest her keen perception discern it, "have exchanged all our clothes, in token of our friendship."

She gazed at him steadily. Such swift, radical reversals of policy were not altogether unknown to the Indian scheme, and it might well have chanced that beyond her knowledge the chieftain and his captive had thus, in the formal and accepted manner, the exchange of every garment, pledged and ratified a reciprocal fraternal bond.

Her mood was gradually softening. She came forward a few steps, pausing once in the sun to gaze at the pearls she held in her slender, deft hand; then, entering the overhanging shadow of the tree, she sank down in an easy kneeling posture, carefully selected and threaded a pearl upon a horsehair which she held in her right hand, half a dozen of the gems dangling at the end of the string, and looking up straight into his eyes, asked with sudden recurrence, —

"What debt?"

"Oh — ah — to be sure; why, the debt of your life," said the wily Laroche. "But for me, Moy Toy might have given you in marriage to the Choctaw prince, who had boasted that he would slay you, would take your life, being a Cherokee born, should the two tribes fall to war with the English and the French. But for me — for I betrayed his counsels — the Choctaw fiend!"

Her hand trembled; she let the pearl fall. She searched for it with patient diligence and a deft finger in the green moss where it glimmered with a lunar lustre. When she had found and threaded it she desisted from her labor,

although she still held the loose pearls in one hand, the partially strung thread in the other.

"I will marry no one," she said apprehensively. "It is very dangerous."

"It is very dangerous to marry Mingo Push-koosh," assented Laroche, who had indeed paid dearly for his humanity.

"And the young men of the Cherokee nation," — she shook her head deploringly. "Oh, they are all mad, too, — all quite mad — all dangerous. I will marry no more."

She looked down at the pearls in her left hand, but did not resume the stringing of them.

"The warrior I married once," she continued, — "he was older and very good — and brought much meat from the winter hunt. He would not scold with a woman — that was beneath a warrior's notice. And if a woman wished to scold, she might go and talk to the Tennessee River. It would do her good and not hurt the river, and her husband would not be obliged to leave her. He was very good."

She gave a vague glance over her shoulder into the open door of his house. Laroche, hyper-sensitive with all his recent anxieties, emotions, sufferings — even morbid — had an uncomfortable realization that deep beneath the thick clay floor of the dwelling the dead man sat, buried so close to the life he no longer lived, so intimately associated with the possessions he no longer owned.

The Frenchman affected a gayer tone.

"But all young men are not mad. Am I not young? I am not mad."

She evaded the answer. "At their gambols they may well seem mad. One does not expect more than. But in war, in council, in marriage, it is not well that young men should be mad."

"The gambols of various nations are different, as with their other customs," remarked Laroche discursively. "But

the young men participating are much alike. I have seen a game of the Cherokees in which the young men seemed mad — oh, very mad indeed."

"What game was that?" Eve demanded; for in spite of her aversion to those bereft young persons, and her stern determination to marry no more, and her grateful recollection of the domestic placidity of an elderly spouse, her interest in the "mad young men" was very fresh and ever new, and easily stimulated to a discussion of their unruly traits and peculiar manners.

"Why," began Laroche, shifting his half reclining posture, that he might support his head upon his hand, his elbow deep in the soft turf, while he watched her listening face, "what would you say if I should tell you what happened when I first came here to Tellico Great with the Choctaw embassy?"

A slight contraction passed over her features always at the mention of the delegation, a spasm of wrath, of reminiscent terror, of indignant and wounded pride that she, a Cherokee princess, holding a line of royal succession, should ever have been in danger of uncaring slaughter, as if she were a beast, at the hands of a grossly arrogant Choctaw, to whom she might have been given as a wife, and for no more provocation than that she had been born a Cherokee.

"What would you say, I wonder," he went on as she bent her dark eyes anew upon him, "if I should tell you that one night I could not sleep; I had had dreams that waked me. And if I should tell you that I rose and walked a long time by the riverside — very quietly, wanting to wake no one. And when at last, refreshed and the dream forgotten, returning within view of the stranger-house — where the Mingo and his Choctaw escort slept" — He paused and affected to laugh, but the laughter stuck in his throat. "The maddest, merriest game — the maddest game!"

She was leaning forward, her eyes shining strangely, the

hand that held the thread moved mechanically, beckoning, beckoning, as if to lure forth the story; the other hand, holding the pearls, trembled like a leaf.

“ Around and around the house was circling the strangest procession of ‘ mad young men.’ Some wore buffalo horns and tails, and all had gourds cut like faces, with torches inside, on their heads; their faces were painted — painted! And one like a panther ran on all fours and leaped and leaped! ” —

“ Ah—h—h! ” A sudden wild scream burst from her lips, which she struck with the palm of her hand, producing a sound indescribably nerve-thrilling, and which he had heard from braves on the war-path. “ The spring of Death! ” she cried in exultation. And again the wild scream split the air. “ No game; no game! ” she exclaimed in convulsive precipitancy. “ That was the mock-rite, the funeral procession, of those they meant to destroy — and oh, I wish they had! Why did they not! why did they not! ”

Laroche’s face was as pallid as the baubles in her hand.

“ The Choctaw embassy — was it intended to massacre them? ”

“ It must have been — though I know nothing of it. This is the invariable prelude — the agreement — the seal of the compact. To circle three times round the house of your enemy, if one rests in your town, as if it were the house of the dead, and with mock and flout and spells to palsy resistance, and with lights to prove the path, and with knives to cut the pledge of friendship, and with the leaping Death to seize them by the throat — ah—h! — ah—h! ”

VII

How he fared on his return to Ioco Town, Laroche never knew. The interval of his transit was a blank in his recollection. He was only aware of the crisis when he plunged out of the encompassing woods, still urging the horse to a wild gallop, lashing him at every bound with his cap, in default of a whip, which he had lost, when or where he could not say.

The town lay before him, idealized in a suffusion of roseate purpling light as the sun was going down beyond those dark, heavily wooded ranges in the west into which the mountain plateau, even then called the Cumberland, splits at its southern extremity. The eastern loftier heights, the Great Smoky, bore an almost visible sentiment of peace on their slopes, which were of an etherealized azure with a reflection of the red west in the suave sky above their domes. The Cherokee dwellings were all solidly dark against the fine, delicate intimations of color in the opalescent atmosphere. Where a fire was glimpsed in the "beloved square," the red and white and yellow of the blaze were like a crude overlay of coarse pigment on some exquisite mosaic. The figures of the Indians themselves in groups of varied aspect, — sundry of them arrayed in aboriginal splendor, feathered and mantled; others almost nude; still again others clad in the coarse and unpictur-esque buckskin shirt and leggings, — all stood as if petrified at the first disordered sound of the wildly galloping hoofs of the horse. They watched in blank surprise the equestrian apparition speeding across the open spaces until,

hardly pausing in front of the trading-house, Laroche flung himself from the saddle. He took no heed to secure the creature. With the reins loose on his neck the horse, amazed at this unwonted liberty and lack of care, reared aimlessly once or twice. Then motionless, with a gaze of obvious surprise, he turned to look after his eccentric rider, who had burst into the trading-house with his warning of the danger upon his lips, that all who cared might hear and tremble. No more would he trust to the foolhardiness of the sturdy trader, who had weathered many a gale of disaffection, signs of Indian displeasure, rumors of massacres impending, and threats of reprisal; nor to the young Highland soldier's unquestioning reliance on the superior judgment of Jock Lesly. The under-trader and the young packmen responded as alertly with fears and precautions as Laroche could wish. With his martial habitudes reasserted in the emergency, Laroche gave the necessary orders with such dispatch, such decision, such obvious discrimination, that the men, discerning their value and aware that none other of the group could have originated the plan, as instantly obeyed as if he had been a military superior entitled to the authority he wielded. Jock Lesly, coming in at haphazard, found himself a mere supernumerary in his own trading-house, where his word had been law. He stared for a moment with stunned surprise, and then at last and after so long a time, hearing the interpretation of the dream he had derided, he began to admit to himself that perhaps more mischief was brewing in the air than he wot of.

"It's the French — thae kittle cattle!" he exclaimed; "I wad na vex mysel' if it were na for the lassie."

He heard with deliberative calmness the preparations which Laroche had projected for the defense of the little colony, which he instantly began to detail, so eagerly, so urgently, that amidst the tumultuous words there came to

Jock Lesly's absorbed sense a fact which he remembered long afterward rather than noted in that moment of crucial stress — a vaguely foreign accent. Now he only marked the features of the plan, and his strong heart was buoyed up by its hopefulness.

"Eh, callant," he cried; "it's gey gleg ye are at this wark! Ye 'll no hae seen foreign service for naething!"

The phrase went the rounds of the lads who stood with their lives in their hands, and, though loath enough to yield them in this petty strife that had not even a fair quarrel for its justification, were still more loath to yield first their strong bodies, endowed with stanchest nerves, to furnish sport to the Cherokees in the delights of the torture. Foreign service! The words were like magic. It was a trained mind, with a practiced eye and an experienced judgment, that disposed their pitiful resources to the best advantage for defense. And with this reassurance these resources hardly seemed so pitiful.

In two minutes the trading-house, a temple of peace and built without the customary loopholes for musketry, had half a dozen sawn through each of the stanch walls, save on the side nearest the dwelling, where a dozen slits were fashioned. The emporium of commerce, being a long and large building in comparison, commanded it on three sides. Around the home in the early days of its occupation a ditch had been once dug, intended to drain the slope. This was still deep but now dry, and in it emergency mines were hastily constructed here and there after a fashion which Laroche had seen in practice in his military experience in Europe. There were still many kegs of powder in the store, a quantity of tow, numerous rude bags and boxes and barrels, half emptied or altogether thrown aside. Of these boxes and barrels he hastily contrived fougasses, lining them with tar before placing in each a heavy charge

of powder. The energetic plying of a dozen spades soon covered them over in the ditch, and several were sunken in deeper pits with gravel and boulders to fill the space to the surface. He himself worked diligently with great deftness upon sundry long, thin bags which he called "saucissons," fashioned from a bolt of Jock Lesly's best linen, filled with powder, tarred externally, to serve as fuses to convey fire to the fougasses. He was a man of infinite expertness and a genius in the way of resource, and barricades for doors and windows were soon contrived of whatever material was at hand. He selected the guard, the greater number of the packmen, who were to hold out the trading-house, which, with its outlook and its loopholes, commanded the dwelling. They were instructed to prevent any possible approach by picking off the assailants by rifle fire, or, in case of a rush, by exploding one of the fougasses, the saucissons of several of which connected with the store, the others with the dwelling itself. The under-trader, as vigorous, devil-may-care, hard-headed, hard-handed, hard-hearted a backwoodsman as could have been found in those rude days, was to take command of the detachment in the trading-house, Jock Lesly himself, Laroche, Callum, and two of the packmen undertaking to defend the dwelling. The two buildings were thus enabled to afford mutual protection, and divide the numbers and break the force of the assault by the Indians, each offering the garrison of the other, in case of extremity, the chance of a refuge in flight.

So swift, so definite, yet so simple were these arrangements that when Moy Toy was summoned from the perplexities of his consultations with the headmen of Ioco in the great council-house, by the wild alarm from the Indians without that warlike preparations were going forward among the trader folk, he found these precautions already in a state of completion. Laroche, a pickaxe in his hand, advanced to meet the chief as he came toward

the dwelling that now peered at him, as it were, suspiciously from loopholes. The sounds of excitement from the square, of wild cries and eager words, the disorder of swift, flitting figures hither and thither, the clash of weapons and the hasty tramp of feet, all implied an unusual activity among the tribesmen. They too were getting under arms, but were distinctly dismayed to find themselves surprised — the onset they had planned anticipated, crippled, perhaps even to be repelled by forethought, adequate preparation, and a valiant defense. In fact, without those tumultuous concomitants of the sudden onslaught, the stealthy ambush, the surprise of treachery in conference, the Indian hardly cared to fight. And although they were so vastly superior in numbers that calculation of odds was impracticable, they were aware that they must needs suffer severely from the fire of the little garrison, whose bullet-proof walls would hold a far stronger force indefinitely at bay. Laroche fixed the period of the enterprise when he warned Moy Toy and the chief of Ioco Town, advancing with him, to come no further.

"The ground is mined with powder," he explained.
"No Indian shall come one pace nearer."

Moy Toy cast an upbraiding glance upon his companion. And Laroche knew in an instant that his discovery of the inimical midnight mummeries and the suspicions they had aroused had been the subject of the debate in the town-house; but for the habitual forbearance of the Indians toward one another, it might have caused an open rupture that this had been so conducted as to betray their plans. He had not valued the pledge of the Indian's word, but he had thought that Moy Toy realized his interest was involved in keeping his promise of immunity to the "trader folk."

Now he would not trust to this.

"I have read my dream, Moy Toy!" he cried trium-

phantly. "Am I not a soothsayer — even like unto an 'old beloved man' myself — simple as I stand here?"

The very tones of his sarcastic voice, ringing so jauntily on the air, daunted the Indians, so assured, so inimical, so subtly menacing his laughter was.

From the loopholes of the barricaded trading-house interested faces peered out to witness the dumb show of this colloquy, the speakers being so distant that only the sound of their voices was distinguishable; the men at their several posts commented loudly to each other. "Eh, sirs, hear till him, now!" "Wow, he had best haud a care!" "Moy Toy looks gin he wad bite, the fearsome auld carle!"

Laroche turned as the two Indians, cautious, mute, doubtful, playing the waiting game, gazed at him. He lifted the pickaxe and struck it upon the ground.

"Here," he cried, drawing the implement along the earth as if tracing the way, "walked the mock mourners — thrice — thrice around the house of the living, as if they were already the dead. Following came the bearers of cords and chains, with charms and spells to hinder resistance. And so — the lantern bearer, with light to prove the path. And him with the knife, to cut the bonds of plighted faith and friendship. And then the leaping Death — quick — quick — to seize his prey!"

Between each mystic sequence of this ghastly figurative array Laroche lifted the pickaxe and drew a stroke along the ground.

The two chiefs gazed now and again at each other as this recital proceeded, first with obvious agitation, giving way to sheer wonder, increasing to awe, and, as the idea became more accustomed, to a fierce anger that flashed in Moy Toy's dark eyes like lightnings from out a storm cloud.

"Do I not read the dream aright?" Laroche cried at last, leaning on the pickaxe and surveying them with a smile of glad triumph, infinitely taunting.

"The white man reads no Cherokee dream," said Moy Toy. "You have been told this."

"The great chief knows all things," flouted Laroche; "I have been told it."

The two Indians looked at him with a keen expectancy that meant woe indeed to the traitor.

"The river whispered it in my ear. I read it in the clouds. The winds are singing it in the pines—I can turn nowhere that it does not cry out to me from all the voices of the earth. For all day I have been in the woods—even as far as Great Tellico; your good horse may show my speed, Moy Toy. All your Cherokee country tells it—the fair land that was to have been rescued from the British, and with the aid of the French made the head and front of an independent Indian confederacy of a dozen tribes!"

The large scope of this harmonious scheme that, could it have been realized,—the combination of the tribes, ever warring against each other, into a union of massed strength against the colonies,—would doubtless have worked mighty changes in the history of this continent, appealed to the breathless hope of the Cherokee statesmen. The chief of Ioco Town hastened to say that Laroche was the cherished friend of the tribe; the town of Ioco loved to hold, to shelter his honored head; he was indeed deceived if he imagined from his distorted reading of dreams of Indians—for dream Indians were mischievous and would not appear right to white men, and thus loved to delude them—that the Cherokees, least of all the town of Ioco, sought to do him mischief; they valued too greatly his promise of instruction, the assurances he had brought from his government, and the prospects he had unfolded of that large freedom and independence he would teach the nation to secure.

"Those prospects are as nothing—as a mere breath—as

that mist before the moon — even the moon's light will scatter it." Laroche glanced up at the great disk slowly rising over the serrated summit line of the gloomy Smoky Mountains, albeit the western sky was yet red and day lingered, dusky and doubtful, among the wigwams, and in the opalescent tints of the river, broken here and there with the tumultuous flashing of the white foam against the rocks.

"Nothing will I promise — not even that I will remain amongst you."

He detected a significant hardening in the faces of the Indian chiefs — a sudden tyrannous gleam in the eyes of Moy Toy.

"You would say I have no choice, Moy Toy." He took from his belt a pistol — a fine new weapon, secured from Jock Lesly's own armament at the trading-house — primed and loaded. "I hold in my hand the opportunities of life and death. Unless all at the trading-station go in peace, go free, and I myself accompany them as far as the Keowee River, I will not remain with you." Once more that dangerous gleam in Moy Toy's eye. "I will place this at my temple," he held the muzzle amidst the loosely curling rings of his light brown hair and deftly touched the trigger, "and in one moment your league with the great French king is a thing of the past. His trusted officer, holding his commission and acting by his authority, will have died in your country, in your custody, as definitely, in his estimation, slain by your hand as if your hand had sped the bullet."

The two Cherokees, obviously at a loss, gazed at each other and hesitated.

"Never will the pettiaugres ascend your demon-infested, rocky rivers — never will the barrier towns rise above and below those defiant, malign obstructions and secure the passage of merchandise. Your vassalage to the British will

be an accomplished fact, your independence a dream ; for I who am sent to organize your armies and perfect your plans and equip your warriors for defense and legitimate aggression in war — I will do nothing ! My mission is at an end, unless you comply with my conditions. I am a soldier and no murderer. I cannot and will not be placed in a position to answer to the British colonial authorities for the innocent blood, for murder, for massacre. I said to you once as I say to you now — Let the traders go ! They shall not return ! Then, with the aid of the French government, I will put into the field an army of Indian braves, officered by French experts in each arm of the service, and the very name of it shall strike more terror to the hearts of the perfidious English than a myriad of border massacres.”

Laroche had already known something of the swiftness with which the crafty savage could shift ground, but he was not prepared for the sudden *volte-face*, without a glance at each other or a sign, with which both Moy Toy and the chief of Ioco began to protest, albeit in decorous fugue, notwithstanding their haste, — it being a standing joke among the Indians, a matter of perennial ridicule, that the white people would talk at the same time or interrupt one another so that none could be distinctly heard. The two chiefs instantly declared that they would respect his words and abide by his promises, which they cherished like the blood of their own hearts. They admitted that they ought earlier to have told him the truth — which for shame they wished to conceal, — that only the mad young men of the town had conceived the ignoble scheme of revenge for some trivial insults which they fancied had been offered them by the young packmen — themselves hardly less insane than the bereft young braves. They had been reproved for their midnight mummeries and their threats thus expressed, and when opportunity should

offer, after the departure of the trader and his pack-train, the offenders should be dry-scratched.

The Frenchman duly appraised the insincerity of all this. He well understood that the plea of the misdoings of their "mad young men," so frequently urged, was now, as often before, merely their scapegoat, designed to bear the burden of the mischievous device of the headmen, which some change of policy or mischance in execution caused them to abandon. He hardly cared, however, to challenge their motive, since it tended to promote the result he desired to foster, — the peaceful withdrawal of the trader's household. He stood decorously listening, with a face of suave acquiescence, until, in the midst of their antiphonal series of excuses and explanations, the chiefs stated, among their reasons for concealing the alleged comparatively innocuous source of the demonstration, that they had refrained from telling him this lest he might esteem his own life insecure among such an uproarious, ill-conditioned troop as their mad young men, and thus desire to leave them.

Laroche, at the imputation, could but laugh aloud in his martial consciousness of courage. The tact of the Indians instantly perceived the false step.

They knew, they protested, the great bravery of the French officer, for no fear had he ! His heart was so strong as even to make him contemplate taking his own life, merely should his plans be crossed. This they besought that he would consider no more, for they only desired to know his mind, that they might comply with his every thought. Still he might well deem that their wild young men could hardly be brought under reasonable authority, that they could be made the instruments of winning and wielding such an independence as he had planned for the splendid future. If he would but observe, he should see how plastic to command they could become, how rightful authority should reduce their turbulence and their clamors.

And indeed as they swarmed over the dusky "beloved square" and through the spaces among the shadowy cabins and wigwams and along the bank of the river, still red under the vague dream light of the faintly tinted sky, the wild excitement that had pervaded the tumultuous groups subsided upon the instant on the reappearance of the chiefs among them; whether a word, a look, a sign wrought the miracle one could hardly say. Laroche, standing gazing after his late interlocutors, could but admire the address with which they had selected the occasion of their withdrawal,—not that they had been faced down by argument, nor that their virulent threats were overborne by counter-threats, nor that their scheme was again proved foolish, futile, fatal to their own future prospects, but only to demonstrate how amenable, how subject to lawful authority were these very "mad young men" when adequate necessity caused it to be exerted. It seemed incredible how promptly all the aspects of peace were renewed. The long, lustrous, slanting rays of the moon, soon falling athwart the town, penetrating the dusky aisles among the Indian dwellings under the drooping boughs of the gigantic trees, flashing upon the foam of the river, or resting in full, unbroken placidity on the "beloved square," scarcely showed the shadow of a quiver, or a firelock, or the flicker of a feathered head. Now and again the quiet echoed to the measured footfall of a sedate passer-by. An open door here and there might reveal a group about a fire where fish were frying for supper, and gossip was still stirring about the events of the day. Dogs clustered around the door and begged with all the insidious canine wiles of their kindred of civilization. The council-house, dome-like in its elevation on its mound above the town, was lighted by a party of young people setting forward some of their usual evening games or pantomimes for the general diversion. The two chiefs, respectively of Tellico and Ioco, had parted as

if nothing more of importance were to be discussed, and Moy Toy, in the public office, as it were, the cabin of the aged councilors, deserted but for two or three of its frequenters, was talking over old times of hunting and fishing and was telling a tale of piscatorial captures which could hardly be matched even in these days of expanded imaginations,—his civil hosts now and again constrained to laugh with guttural remonstrance, or to interject an incredulous comment, “Ugh! Ugh!”

At the trading-house, lights flickered within, but the barricaded doors continued closed. The little garrison were to sleep upon their arms in view of possible treachery in some lapse of vigilance. Even thence, however, came loud, jesting voices, and now and again hilarious snatches of song; all were very mirthful and with a renewed sense of security under the double safeguard of adequate precaution against surprise and the apparent satisfaction and pacification of the Cherokees.

In the next few days preparations for an early and orderly departure were seriously inaugurated. It was not so much in advance of the usual time for the semiannual journey to Charlestown for the demonstration to augur undue fear of the Indians or to seem prompted by the recent suspicious events. With an apparent hardihood, that was yet the craft of caution, Jock Lesly more than once postponed the date for the flitting, openly alleging the reason for the delay: now it was the legitimate one of awaiting a consignment of deerskins which he had been notified was to be sent from Toquoe; now it seemed that a purely arbitrary wish of his own induced him to dispatch a messenger on a long wild-goose chase for a conference with an Indian friend of auld lang syne, for whom he had undertaken a personal commission to make sundry purchases in Charlestown,—which gear, when described from the aboriginal point of view, was found to have no counterpart in the material world;

indeed the demand for it was prompted in the full faith that whatever wish the heart of man could fashion the great mart could furnish forth. The remonstrances sent on a second trip by the runner were productive only of very guarded modifications in the requisites, and all Ioco Town, in its excess of sophistication, was laughing both at the simplicity of the old Indian of remote Kanootare Town — who had never been as far as the Congarees, and who looked upon Jock Lesly as a master magician in the mechanical arts — and at the kindly worry and fret of the trader himself.

“Heard ever onybody the like o’ that — the daft auld carle! And where am I to find sic gear? And am na I a fule to try? A hammer, that suld hae a gun, like a pistol, in the eend, wi’ a sharp knife for skelpin’ that clasps under — sae he’ll be aye ready for wark or war. Ding it a’, I’ll no fash mysel’!”

As he strode about the place and discussed the absurdity with the various braves, all seeking to recognize some modern and simpler invention in the mists of his elaborate instructions, and the Indians came and went from the trading-house and loitered about its recesses with the young packmen, all in complete and obvious amity, there was not the vaguest suggestion of the antagonism that had threatened the destruction of the little party. The idea seemed a flout to credulity. Jock Lesly again doubted its reality at times. “Hegh, lad,” he said to Laroche, “ye hae gie us an unco stirrin’. I wad na tak a gliff at a potato-bogle. It’s ower easy to be frightened.”

For Laroche, albeit aware how thin was this crust of peace that overlay the seething, fiery crater of conspiracy and murder, was forced to run the gauntlet in some sort, — to be the butt of the ridicule which the harbinger of danger that does not materialize always is called upon to suffer. Now and again he encountered this among the young packmen poking fun in a sly way. The high value which they

had set upon his views because of his experience in actual encounters in the continental wars, in which he stated he had served, seemed suddenly inverted, and for this very reason his measures were derided. It was a point of almost religious exaction in those days, as indeed sometimes in these, to decry the regular soldier in aggrandizing the militia or the volunteer, on the somewhat absurd hypothesis that the entire devotion of a man's time to a pursuit renders him necessarily inexpert at it, or that the more one learns of military science the less one knows. Whether this comes about from the instinctive arrogation of the civilian that he is as fit in a fight as any man, and knows by intuition all that the soldier learns by hard knocks, it is one of the dearest delusions of the popular mind and is not to be lightly trifled with. Laroche must needs have been more the diplomat and less the soldier than he was to have perceived this spirit without the usual snorting indignation and sentiment of baffled wonder at the presumption of the comparison. But it is of that grade of intimate persuasion in which argument or any certainty of demonstration is futile, and like other military men earlier and since he permitted it to pass unchallenged, with a secret scorn and a mocking acquiescence. It was only in the presence of Lilius that he winced under this derision, knowing that but for him the whole trading-station would be in ashes, its embers quenched with the blood of its inmates. Yet in the same instant he was saying to himself that her presence should be naught to him, and that this guying was a trifle.

How could her presence be naught, when across the supper table the tiny flame of the candle showed her blue eyes kindling like sapphires?

“Ou, ay, ay,” — her father was answering Callum's inquiry, — “Tam is gaun wi' us — Tam 's gaun to haud a care o' us, — gin he no taks to dreamin' agen!” He stopped his chuckle with half a scone.

Lilias had risen and turned away, for Callum MacIlvesty wanted more parritch and Laroche had matter other than Jock Lesly's clumsy jest to canvass in secret agitation. That blue, jeweled light in her starry eyes—was it set aglow because the day of parting seemed yet distant?—how could he care for the trader's flout!

The next day he had in some sort a revenge for his installation as laughing stock. He had repeatedly cautioned the young packmen against the lurking dangers of the fougasses which he had connected with the trading-house for its defense. There had supervened so general a scorn of the warning, the menace—even the sight of the Indian town under arms had been apparently only the reflex of their own acts of hostility—that the emergency mines seemed but a part of the whole invalid hoax until a stout, red-haired young packman, striking his flint hard by, communicated a spark to a saucisson, and upon the consequent explosion of the fougasse he was tossed like a feather into the air and had three fingers blown off. The ground for several yards was ripped open as if the ditch had never been filled, and the crags and chasms of the mountains rang and rang with the successive reverberations of the detonation.

Great as was the commotion among the trading folk, the incident was as a revelation to the Indians. Almost palsied by terror, as in some stupendous convulsion of nature, they no sooner comprehended the agency of the disaster than their anxiety was increased twofold. At this period, although the use of firearms was general among them and the ancient bow and arrow were superseded, save in cases of necessity, gunpowder was as yet an unaccustomed force except as confined to musketry. They still entertained great terror of artillery, and the effects of powder in mining and in so large a quantity seemed little short of miraculous. Seeing the trader's band presently clustered about the scene of the disaster, several of the savages ventured to approach,

suspiciously sniffing the sulphur laden air and eyeing the deep chasm in the ground with a grave, tentative aspect and a sort of serious disaffection, which was in itself a most portentous threat. It seemed to argue that scarcely any advantage was to be neglected against people who could bring to their aid so potent an auxiliary of destruction as this. Evidently the town itself might be thus destroyed. The Indians began to walk about the pit, gazing down at it with the sort of averse appropriation which one feels toward aught of menace designed with a personal application. They measured the inimical capacities of the fougasse, dwelling upon the intention of its device, and obviously felt that anger experienced when one heartily takes the ill will for the deed. Their state of mind was all at once so rancorous that albeit the explosion of the fougasse was only another indication of the strength of the defenses and the value of the resources of the white man, and thus would seem to reinforce the dangers of attack, the fact that it was planned to carry death and destruction to them, who had as yet given no overt cause of offense and failed in naught of open friendship, was as a challenge to strategy, invited reprisal, and made vain all protestations of good will.

“Eh, we maun be gangin’ the morn’s morn,” said Jock Lesly, wiping his brow with his great red handkerchief, and gazing down from the window of the spence at the curious crowds that came and looked silently upon the snare—riven and exploded and harmless now—that yet had been laid for them.

“An’ what for no?” cried Liliias impatiently. “Ye’re aye sayin’ ‘we maun be gangin’ an’ we maun be gangin’,’ an’ we aye bide here!”

“Whist, whist, my bairn.” Then perceiving some inconsistency, “The deil’s in the wimmen folk!” Jock Lesly cried indignantly. “’Twas only yesterday sennight that

ye sat greetin' on your creepie an' said your heart was sair
to leave thae grand mountains, — an' go ye wad na ! ”

The girl laughed slyly. So dull he was! So well, too, for a father to be dull, when he had “sic a fule” for a daughter. She suddenly grew grave and blushed with a deep, serious, conscious glow. She had caught MacIlvesty’s eyes, bright, alert, with a world of speculation in them as they were fixed upon her face. Could it be that he connected her sudden change of will with the fact that on that tearful yesterday sennight she had not known that mad Tam Wilson was to join their march? For he had since announced that, designing to return to Virginia, he would accompany the trader’s cavalcade as far as the Keowee River, — a great detour and much out of his way.

VIII

NOT only Tam Wilson, but Moy Toy himself, Quorinnah, a dozen braves from Tellico, and as many more of Ioco Town joined the escort, the Cherokee headmen having become impressed definitely with the idea that their interest was essentially involved in keeping faith with Laroche.

An early start was made the morn's morn. The night had not yet revealed the aspect of the day, whether fair or foul ; the world was sunk in darkness and swathed in mists. Now and again, glancing upward, one might see a star, augury that the sky was clear, and then the web of vapor annulled the scintillation and portended the gathering of clouds. Torches were here, there, everywhere, flaring through the gloom. The gable of the little home would show for a moment as one sped past, and anon would collapse into the similitude of a burly shadow. The trading-house stood forth with continuous distinctness ; the light within streamed through the open doors as the final preparations of departure were in progress. It gave bizarre glimpses of the heavily laden train of horses standing — shadowy equine figures — outside, with now and again one of the packmen moving in the midst, readjusting a burden or examining the strength of the girths. In the chill matutinal air the bells on the animals gave out a keen jangling, — all the clamors of the raucous voices of the packmen crying here and there ; the noisy movement of bales and boxes scraping upon the floors or against each other ; the thud of pawing hoofs ; the swift beat of human footsteps to and fro were punctuated by this continual, metallic

vibration, which somehow was jarring to the senses and added a distinct element of confusion. Albeit, with the expectation of immediate departure, the preparations were deemed complete the night before, still, when the actual moment was at hand, it seemed that all was yet to be done — after the perverse manner of a journey's start. Trifles developed into obstacles; obstacles became immovable; the impracticable asserted its inelastic limitations; and throughout was heard, from time to time, Jock Lesly's half paternal, half petulant, admonitory upbraiding, "Oh fie! — oh fie!"

Occasionally he quitted the precincts of the trading-house, leaving the solution of its problems to his lieutenants, and plunged into the more dusky and shadowy domain of his own dwelling, where, however, he acquired no placidity, for now and again his favorite adjuration issued thence, invested with a sort of pathetic intonation of futility and associated with the name of Lilias. "Callum," he would yell from the door in despair, "Lilias winna ride ahint ye on the pillion!" Then his stentorian roar, relaxing to domestic exhortation to the rebel of the interior, seemed in the distance a mere rumble of "Oh fie!" in conscious defeat; he would lift his voice anon as he was beaten back from one line of defense to another, "Callum, Lilias winna ride ahint me on the pillion!"

Callum's face, half seen in the flare from the door, grew set and hard, as he stood saddling with his own well-descended hands the palfrey destined to bear the weight of the trader's daughter. His action was significant, whether or not it was observed. He had begun to take the pillion off — since she would accompany neither him nor her father she should not ride behind the saddle of Tam Wilson, if that were her object. The other men looked at one another, laughing slyly, with a certain relish in the paternal discomfiture and the hardiness of the young insurgent,

rejoicing in the ultimate victory of "little lassie Lilias," after the manner of those who are indulgent to the whims and desirous of forwarding the power of a spoiled and imperious child — out of their own household. They discerned nothing more serious in the discussion, but Tam Wilson, busy in the group, was obviously expectant.

A longer interval of argument and remonstrance ensued. Then the great voice, with a hapless quaver in its tones issued forth anew.

"Callum, Callum ! Lilias winna ride on the pillion at a'. Lord save us ! The lassie vows she maun hae a tall horse all for her nainsel' — oh fie ! oh fie ! "

He was fairly beaten, for time was against him, and he must needs come out and see to the getting of his convoy together. Again and again in the extremity of his despair he protested that night would find them still hirpling about Ioco Town. But the first long slant of the sun met the pack-train in full march, descending one of those steep defiles among the mountains and the swirls of the Tennessee River, and the wind itself was not more blithe and free and fain to travel. The pack-horses swung in single file along the familiar ways of the old trading-path, now at a brisk trot, now carefully treading a ledge whence a false step would precipitate the creatures into the torrents below, without rein or guidance selecting their footing and balancing their burden with that strong animal intelligence and good will in labor which might seem to entitle them to be considered conscious factors in the commercial enterprise. Their chiming bells, blithely echoing from the crags, now loud, now softly vibrating, as the tones of those in the vanguard or far away in the rear came to the ear, made no dissonance in the free open air in their diversity of quality, and smote upon the dash of waters with the effect of sudden cymbals in the flutings and stringed vibrations of orchestral music. The mist had taken wings. Far and near the airy essences were

rising from the mountains. The morning star, luminous, splendid, in her amber cloud, exhaled like a dewdrop in the glance of the sun. The spirit of May was in the air. The alert breeze had a keen, matutinal reviviscence, despite the languors of spring, and upon the mountains was a vague, blue presence, an efflorescence of haze like the bloom on a grape, that made their tint deeper, richer, softer, whether it were the azure of the furthest reaches of vision or the sombre purple of the nearer ranges, or the densely, darkly verdant slopes closing about the immediate vicinage of the series of cup-like coves.

In the distinct light the convolutions of the train became easily discernible to the eye, as from lower ground one could look back up the winding slopes of the ravine, so narrow at times as to leave a passage but for two or three abreast. Several of the stoutest men, fully armed, rode in the vanguard, and after the pack animals and their drivers came another close squad of horsemen, for owing to the packmen that Callum MacIlvesty had brought with him, the guard of the pack-train was more numerous than it was wont to be. A salient feature of the long, winding troop was the waving feathers of the braves, themselves riding together, for albeit most friendly of aspect, it was deemed meet that they and the young packmen should have as scant opportunity as might be to fall at loggerheads.

“They can’t talk thegither, praise God!” said Jock Lesly, who had had little thought he should ever be in case to be thankful for the impiety of the builders of the Tower of Babel, that had brought about the confusion of tongues. “But they are a’ kittle cattle, and I’se no trust them thegither.”

As he himself rode between the packmen and the Cherokee braves, his own companions were Moy Toy and Quorinnah, who had attached themselves to the chief of the expedition as their only equal in point of rank. He had

anticipated this and had directed Callum to ride at the bridle rein of Lilias, whose station was between the squad of extra packmen and the drivers of the pack-train. Tam Wilson had no place assigned to him in the line of march. He was aware, when he took up his position on the other side of her palfrey, that he might seem animated by a sentiment far alien to the spirit of resignation and renunciation that had lately possessed him, but in reality he was influenced by the knowledge of the added protection his proximity afforded her. Nevertheless, with the satisfaction of their safe departure, which he knew his own exertions had secured, the keen edge of exhilaration and expectancy that dangers still unmasked may give, the necessity to support the character he had assumed, the delirious joy that her presence and his knowledge of her preference could but diffuse through mind and heart, all overcame for a time his sense of regret for his idle delay, his disloyalty, his duplicity. He forgot the futile cruelty to Callum MacIlvesty, and the disingenuousness toward her; and the identity of Tam Wilson, which he claimed as his own true character, was never more definite, more consistent than as he fared gayly by her side down the devious ways of the mountain wilderness. The tinkling of the bells and the chiming of the echoes were in his ears. He breathed the fragrance that the herbs of the earth distilled into the rare air; the colors of the landscape glowed so rich, so fine, so fair; and all the heart of a beautiful woman who loved him was in her eyes as she looked at him.

It was plain to Callum MacIlvesty, and Lilias scarcely cared that it was. She had no realization of him save that his words, his face, his very existence irked her, and she would fain be rid of him — being in the nature of an interruption of the free thought of another. He wondered afterward that he could be so patient — to watch her fair face cloud as even casually she turned; to hear the inflec-

tion of annoyance in her voice when she spoke to him, and she did not speak unless she needs must answer; to mark her appeal to Tam Wilson for the buckling of her rein anew, and the readjustment of her saddle; for a flower growing beside the way; for a cluster of wild strawberries, which she ate to the manifest danger of life and limb, the reins falling on her horse's neck as he gingerly picked his way, stumbling now and again down the rugged descent, until Tam Wilson himself gathered up the lines and guided the animal. And when the strawberries were eaten she rode on, laughing like a child, her head bare under the sun, her golden curls hanging down on her shoulder, and her milk-white face burning red, although her riding mask swung by its string to her belt.

Sometimes Laroche was summoned back by the requisition of Moy Toy, Jock Lesly, and Quorinnah, to give opinions or arbitrate on some moot point of the trading privileges as established by the treaty, the Cherokees secretly delighted that it was to a Frenchman, actively employed in the French interest, to whom the unwitting British trader was appealing, by whose decision he professed himself willing to abide, and that these fine-spun theories were to be of consequence no more.

Then — the two young Scotch people left together — Lilius would gravely grasp the reins and ride slowly along, gazing up continually at the massive ranges, for their aspect shifted as the route of the travelers deviated. When one majestic dome, always in view from the little window of the spence, seemed on the very border-land of vision, the turn around a crag about to cut it off forever, she checked her horse and paused to look her last upon it.

“I'll never see it mair!” she cried, in accents of positive pain. “I'll ne'er be sae happy again as I hae been, living in the sight. Fare ye weel, sweet friend. May the warld gae cannily wi' ye!”

The blue dome still towered like a mirage in the distance above the purple of nearer heights and the green of the foothills; then the crag intervened, and suddenly she laid down the reins on the horse's neck and began to tie on her mask.

"Ye 'll see mountains agen. There 's mountains enough elsewhere, Lilias," said Callum, in awkward consolation, as he caught up the reins and held the horse to a steady gait.

"Nane like these," she protested in a husky voice. "There 's mountains enough in Scotland, an' that 's nae joy to you nor to me."

And this was very true, as the poor exile realized; his heart might ache vainly for the rugged mountains he remembered and loved, and as for these mountains of this new land she, whom he loved best, loved them well for another man's sake. He gazed upon them with dreary eyes and an inward protest against them. Happy in their shadow! in magnitude, in multitude they typified woe, unceasing, immeasurable, ineradicable. So these two rode on together in silence, save that she murmured now and again, "Thae sweet mountains!"

He was none the happier when Tam Wilson came spurting up again, and Lilias was suddenly blithe and bonny once more. She was as gay as a child when they reached the first unfordable river, where the singular methods of ferriage of those days came into requisition. Through the shallow waters of the fords the knowing pack animals had cheerfully trudged, scarcely needing and certainly not noticing the halloos and cracking of whips with which the packmen beguiled the passage. Here, however, was a river deep enough to threaten damage to the packs and to require swimming, and the horses lined up on the margin, still with their tinkling bells fitfully jingling, and staidly awaited, more than one with expectant whinnies, the removal of their burdens. A delay ensued, as always, and

each section of the guard coming up, kept apart to this time for reasons of policy, halted in a medley on the high and rocky banks which resounded and reëchoed with the various calls in Cherokee and English and braid Scots, with the jangling of bells and stamping of hoofs. Here and there an active and agitated search was in progress for the boat, constructed of buffalo skins and always hidden among the willows or rocks on shore when not in requisition by the traders and packmen and their Indian coadjutors,—the headmen of Ioco, the town where the station was situated, being admitted to the secret of the cache.

“Gone! gone!”—a frenzied exclamation arose. “Stolen! Carried away!”

Perhaps hidden anew! A score of active figures dashed hither and thither, now bursting out of the willows with exclamations of dismay, now plunging down the bank to a new point of search. Some as they sped up and down showed above the rocks heads polled and feathered, others, most genteel, with cocked hats, and again the coonskin cap or Callum’s Highland bonnet was in evidence. Lilias, in the flickering, glinting shade of a low-hanging beech tree, her head bare and golden, her face so fair, looking as some dryad might, captured by this wild and varied rout, waited like one apart, without a pulse of the impatience that swayed the whole cavalcade. She was living in the present. For aught she cared the journey might last forever. The past, it was naught to her; the future was so strangely veiled—and somehow she trembled at the thought. To-day! to-day!

The disaster threatened a long delay; a new boat must be built, new hides procured, all suitably tanned, and the incident itself suggested treachery and fomented suspicion. More than once the eyes of Callum MacIlvesty and Tam Wilson met in secret comment, an interchange of inquiry, a fraternal interdependence, all other considerations forgot-

ten in the realization of a common danger. But Moy Toy's face was frankly clouded, and Quorinnah was already suggesting ways and means by which, going into camp here, help might be fetched from Ioco Town. Only Jock Lesly gave no outward sign of his inward perturbation as he strode up and down the bank, save that now and again he admonished his cohorts with a shake of the head and a vehement "Oh fie ! oh fie !"

And at last and suddenly, quiet descended on all the disordered crew, bating a word or two of rancorous upbraiding and a retort of raucous yet sheepish protest, for the boat was found where first it had been presumed to be. It had been overlooked, so well had it been hidden, and once declared to be missing the place of its usual and most obvious bestowal was not searched again till desperation suggested the retracing of all the various steps that had been taken. And so it was presently launched. A queer craft we of to-day would deem it, and perhaps would prefer something more stanch and less picturesque, seeing how swift and deep and rocky was the river. But the capsizing of such a boat meant only some slight injury of the goods and the swift swimming of the hardy passengers ashore, none the worse for the plunge into the clear waters of the mountain stream. The hides stretched between stout saplings, serving as gunwale and keel and tightly bound at each end, were distended toward the centre by crosspieces of the same fashioning, holding the boat in the conventional canoe shape, and the structure would convey ten horse loads at once. The method of progression was still more singular — no oars nor poles were used in its propulsion. The hardy packmen of the day, being lightly clad in buckskins, were wont boldly to fling themselves into the river and swim across, pushing the pettiaugre before them, their horses all gallantly swimming in the rear. When the first boat's load had been piled upon the craft, Lilius was

conducted down the steep bank and seated in the boat, the only passenger, upon the bales of fine dressed deerskins. Callum MacIlvesty and a number of other young men were instantly in the water, wading first, then swimming, with the liberated horses following after. The girl liked the novelty. She smiled down from her high perch at each strong stroke that sent the curious structure throbbing and quivering on its way, with its silver wake and a little ripple of foam at the prow. The river was crystal clear, smooth, and shining in its centre under the sun, deeply, duskily green beneath the shadow of the trees on the further shore. Beyond, where the stream rounded a sort of peninsula, a great glittering stretch of water seemed to extend indefinitely in a haze that hung about a flat margin and there met the sun in a vaporous shimmer, dazzling yet soft. All the group on the hither shore gazed at the progress of the boat, but only the cultivated imagination of the French officer suggested similitudes of aught that it was not. Against that green and white and misty background the shell-shaped craft and the still and smiling golden-haired figure recalled some legendary sea nymph, some Venus in the gliding shallop; the sleek heads of the attendant train suggested dolphins and sea horses, gleaming in the sunset as they swam swiftly after.

There was scant space for the flattery of illusions, for the deep shadows of the leafy bank opposite were falling upon this misty presentation of myths, the necromancy of the sheen and shimmer, and obliterating it as the little craft was pushed in to the land. Those of the packmen who had crossed were shaking the water from their dripping garments with no more care for a drenching than so many shaggy dogs, and presently were resaddling their horses, while Liliias, quite dry and fresh, stood apart on a little promontory of rock and with a scornful wave of the hand bade Callum in his saturated kilt keep his distance.

It seems incredible that such a man as Laroche should fear a little guying, but perhaps it was only the spectacle of Callum's discomfiture that reconciled him to the knowledge of the scoffs at him, covert and otherwise, which he knew he should receive from the other young men when with Jock Lesly and the Indian headmen he should cross in the boat on its second trip, his condition as a recent invalid entitling him to share their honors and ease. It was barely possible, however, that Lilius would have found no occasion, even were he also dripping from the short swim, to place an embargo on his near approach. Why it was that this watery quarantine should have roused Callum MacIlvesty's spirit of revolt, of self-assertion, of pride, it is difficult to say. Perhaps merely the limit of his endurance was reached when he was cried out upon like a too affectionate and dripping water dog.

"I winna sprinkle your kirtle," he said with some dignity, despite the triviality of the theme. And he withdrew himself — not merely till the hot sun and the reflected heat of sand and rocks should dry off his garments, which, aided by the swift running to and fro on the errands of the pack-train, the brisk wind, and the warmth of his own body, was shortly effected.

The whole train was in motion again incredibly soon, considering the abnormal difficulties which these primitive methods of ferriage would seem to present. The young packmen, by reason of being detailed to the earliest crossing, were kept separated from the braves, the "mad young men," with whom it was feared some quarrel might arise through their perverse ingenuity, independent of verbal communication. These tribesmen came last of all, after the dignitaries of both factions, and thus when once more on the march the original formation of the little cavalcade was preserved.

Only Callum MacIlvesty had shifted his position. He no

longer rode at the right hand of Lilias, but ahead with the squad of packmen, and Tam Wilson succeeded to the position he had occupied ; but Lilias appeared hardly to have noticed Callum's absence, and certainly did not waste a thought upon it. Her radiant spirit seemed to shine through her eyes — she was gay, whimsically, childishly fascinating one moment ; soft, serious, deeply emotional the next ; now showing her more earnest traits, careful, womanly, unselfish ; and again the veriest flutterer of a butterfly. She had never been so protean of mood, so beautiful, so charming. And yet Laroche looked upon her with changed eyes, a newly aroused and upbraiding conscience. The frightful bodily danger in which they had all recently stood from the murderous Cherokees, his triumphant scheming to avert their impending fate, had been as a reprieve to thoughts that now in this leisure again clamored for a hearing. His long, idle lingering amongst them and enforced concealment of his identity had brought this menace upon them. He had not yet annulled all its evils. And now — whither was he tending ? Daily he considered the question.

He was a man of education, having had superior facilities and both the talent and the will to avail himself of them. He was not without social culture, and he moved in coteries of refinement. While not of the higher nobility, he was still a man of good birth, of degree, and of some fortune, and this had enabled him to tolerate the more kindly the bourgeois, nay the peasant-like aspect of the Lesly household, since it was but a matter of contemplation, and by no means of assimilation. He had regarded it with all its homely traits and habitudes as impersonally as if it were a scene on a stage.

In addition he was consumed by professional ambition ; he had always been accounted an efficient, superior officer ; he believed that his military abilities were great. Upon the successful issue of his plans among the Cherokees and

other tribes high preferment would await him in the gift of the French government. To hamper by a *mésalliance* with a simple Scotch girl, the daughter of a bourgeois trader, his future, his pride of diplomatic achievement, his opportunity to render great services to his government — he was appalled by the very thought. He promised himself that he would make no such sacrifice for any woman on earth ! Seriously contemplated, he could not raise her to his level, and he would not sink to hers. All must be renounced should he dream of her in any sense but to kiss her hand in gallantry and bless her goodness in gratitude.

Yet what was he doing ? Separating forever two young people whose kindness had been so largely instrumental in saving his life. Lapsed in the luxury of a sweet, delicate, almost abstract emotion, flattered by the consciousness of her love, he had supplanted her true suitor by this ghastly simulacrum of a lover, and was wrecking the happiness of both. He was sentimental enough, in the abstract, to care much for a sentimental woe. He was conscientious enough to appraise the unjustified intermeddling of the course he had pursued, and sensitive enough to shrink from bearing the consciousness of it all his days. With the policy of the confessional of the faith in which he had been trained, that restitution must accompany repentance and peace only follow penance, he was canvassing how to undo in days all that he had wrought in months. It should not be, he declared arbitrarily. He cared honestly, kindly, too much for her, loved her too truly, for herself, as a friend ! And toward Callum himself he was not indifferent. Yet how could he bring them together again ? Difficulties hedged him about. He feared the English in his character of French emissary. Now, daily, he was approaching the Englishman's country. He adventured, indeed, much for the sake of her and hers. Knowing his prejudice, he would not trust Jock Lesly with his secret. But the girl loved him.

He would trust Lilius ! She would doubtless expect him to follow her to Charlestown. She would watch and wait for him. She would pine. But should he disclose his nationality, his employ, it must appear that their parting was final ; in all probability, so divided by distance and prejudice, they would never meet again. It would be a poignant pang to them both, and Lilius he could never forget ! If thus unhampered she could find her happiness in Callum MacIlvesty — he sighed — but he would not grudge it. At all events he owed her this: she must not waste her sweet young life in devotion to an illusion.

In reaching this resolution he was far too acute, too accustomed to introspection, not to perceive that he had postponed the shattering of the romance that had delighted him until its enchantment had at the most but a few days' lease. He took some credit, however, that he had determined to submit to the ordeal and the jeopardy it involved before these were passed, that he might have space for an earnest effort to bring the young people to their former understanding. Besides, he argued, he might easily, in the interests of his own safety, hold his peace. Surely it was not a part of his duty, in going about the country, to warn susceptible maidens against losing their hearts to him.

Notwithstanding the stress of this absorption, he conducted a dual train of thought, listened to her talk, answered in character, followed the manifold changing theme, commented on the varying aspects of the country, — all the region being new to him, — found even space for a keen notice of her flattered consciousness that it was for her sake that he made this long and laborious detour in his journey to delay their parting — if ever they should part again ; and only once did he answer at random, and only once did he fall into silence, to be merrily rallied and asked when and where did he see that wolf.

One day the camp was pitched about sunset, the blue twilight yet in abeyance. This, too, was the first halt since breakfast, dinner having been eaten on the march. A substantial meal, therefore, was this supper *al fresco*. Kettles were swung gypsy fashion; venison was broiled on the coals; some wild ducks, brought down by a volley in the course of the march, were split and toasted on a long stick at the general camp, but brandered at the fire of the "gentlefolks" as the contingent of Moy Toy and Jock Lesly was called,—it boasting a branding iron. The "gentles" also rejoiced in a case bottle of brandy, while the lower grades were content with rum, and only Lilias and the Frenchman drank a "dish of chocolate." By a watercourse, necessarily, the halt was made and in the neighborhood of one of those exquisite springs for which the region is noted.

It seemed illimitably deep as Laroche and Lilias stood amidst the sweet-scented ferns on its rocky verge and then sat down on one of the fractured fragments fallen from the great crag beetling from the mountain slope above their heads.

Lured by the fascination that this sort of fountain in the wilderness seems to exert on all travelers, each of the cavalcade had come to gaze upon the crystalline depths which were like topaz in the lucent tints imparted by the golden gravel beneath. The hewing of the circular basin was almost as symmetrical as if wrought by hand. The down-dropping branches of the sycamore and beech nearly veiled the crags closing about them, and the far-away mountains across a stretch of valleys and lesser ranges were purple and sombre under the light of the sinking and vermillion sun. Only these two lingered here, quite silent at first, and Laroche wondered if he could speak at all. He glanced about doubtfully.

"Lilias," he said slowly, "I have something to say to you."

The shadow of a homing bird sped across the sunlit valley. Down the current of the river was visible a red reflection that was not a cast of the western sun, but was caught from a camp-fire on the bluff. At these he looked, not at her, lest the sight of her face disarm his resolution ; yet somehow he was aware of the sudden flutter of her heart and the quickening of her pulses, and he knew that for all his art and all his tact he had begun amiss. He hastened to nullify the impression she might have taken, nay, nay, must have taken from his words.

“ It is a secret,” he said hurriedly. “ You must promise that you will tell no one — not even your father.”

He wondered, his eyes still fixed on those furthest western mountains, if her heart had ceased to beat, so still she suddenly was ; then he realized rather than saw the slow motion of surprise, of protest, as her head turned toward him on its long and slender white neck.

“ Not even your father,” he reiterated, for he must needs go on.

So sudden had been the revulsion of feeling, so complete, so paralyzing, that she could not trust her voice. And this was well, for he perceived that even in these few steps he had stumbled into a second pitfall. Exclude the paternal idol, know a secret forbidden to that paragon of wisdom and crown of creation, Jock Lesly ! In another moment he would have a downright refusal of the trust. He must quickly involve her in the safety, the confidence of another, and even filial fealty would not warrant her in breaking faith with him.

“ No,” he qualified hastily, “ don’t promise. I will throw myself on your honor — in the fullest assurance of safety. Lilius, I am not what I seem ; I am an emissary of the French government, an officer of the army ! ”

She recoiled violently, suddenly shaken, shocked ; and albeit ghastly pale she fixed a challenging stare upon him.

"A spy?" she demanded in a husky voice, impressive with its deliberate tone and weighty yet incredulous rebuke.

Laroche hastily collected his faculties. This untoward trend of his disclosures must needs be checked in sheer consideration of the safety of his neck.

"Ah, Lilias, *bien aimée*," he cried, in half petulant, half affectionate protest. "How can you misunderstand? Remember how I came to you — was it of my own intention, my own volition?"

The recollection of those weeks of illness, of helplessness, when he lay under their roof unconscious, brought thither by her father, was supplemented by the thought of the simple domestic routine in which he had grown a factor and had made the dear sense of home in these savage wilds so doubly dear, his eager care for their safety, his suspicions of the Indians, his precautions for the defense of the trading-station, his oft ridiculed anxieties and prognostications of savage treachery that had at last proved stern truth, — only foiled by his foresight and ingenuity and sagacity. As these reflections flitted through her mind, his eyes read the changing expressions of her face like an open book. He spoke as if in response.

"Remember," he said with emotion, "for believe me I can never forget, dear heart" —

Suddenly, seeing the roseate color at the word beginning to return, to deepen, to glow in her cheek with a subtle, conscious emotion, he was admonished of that far more significant secret of his mission which must be disclosed, and that quickly, for the sake of both.

"No, not a spy," he declared deliberately, seeking to quell the wild plunging of his own heart, as though one should find a gentle palfrey suddenly metamorphosed into a mighty charger. "My mission was primarily to survey and report the character of the obstructions to navigation of the Cherokee River — far away, a hundred miles or more; but

I feared to say as much to your father, because of the international jealousies, that yet need hamper no friendship between him and me. May we not think kindly of each other as man to man, even though the nations are at war?"

He turned questioning eyes upon her—and she, her face so sweetly flushed, her eyes so gently luminous, looking all her love for him, all her soft faith in his love for her, silently acceded, for she could not trust her voice in the consciousness of what she looked to hear, what his words next promised.

Oh, how could he speak? Yet how could he dally and delay and torture both himself and her? The look in her face nearly routed his resolve. With an effort he went on almost at random, blurting out his revelation by piece-meal.

"My mission was primarily merely diplomatic—but I foresaw the opportunity here and, representing it to the government, I volunteered for the service; my authority was accordingly extended, and I will command an army of Indians when it is put into the field in the French interest."

He had plucked off a frond of the fern that grew by the margin and was tearing it to bits and throwing them from him in the pause. They could hear the water of the spring softly gurgle. The voices of the camp beyond sounded distant and a-dream, like half heeded calls to drowsy ears; the reflection of the camp-fires in the river had mustered a deeper glow, as if recruited from the crimson clouds so lately parading through the sky. Now the sky was vacant, a clear, pure, faintly tinted blue, and in its midst a star gleamed with an incomparable whiteness above the darkly bronze green of the mountains. And yet the night had not come. The world was full of this gentle, limpid clarity of light. He could have seen every line of

her face as she sat upon the rock had he dared glance toward her.

If the girl had been an image, craftily wrought of stone, she could have shown no more semblance of life than that silent, motionless figure.

She doubtless heard. She could but understand.

The reserve of her attitude overwhelmed the alert expectation of the Frenchman, whose mental posture had been, by long and agitated anticipation, braced for expostulation, for reproaches, for tears, nay even appeals, — for she loved him as he loved her, and he knew it. This absolute nullity as the result of a revelation so momentous to them both reacted on his nerves. Oddly enough he experienced the tumult of feeling in which he had thought to see her whelmed. He even called out to her in his agitation, as heretofore he had prefigured her appeal to him. He had utterly lost his artificial poise — he had become once more the natural man.

“Lilias! Lilias!” he cried with a poignant accent. “It is true, lassie, to my sorrow — to my sorrow! I am a French soldier, but no enemy of you or of yours, and, God help me, I love you!”

She lifted her head suddenly and looked at him with stern eyes, which, even despite the dusk, he could by no means misunderstand.

“Do you mean,” she said, “that you volunteered to spirit up these fiends of Indians to fall upon the frontier and massacre women and children?”

He drew back, affronted and wounded.

“Nay, Lilias, war is war, and never play. If women and children suffer, 't is the fortune of war, and the responsibility is on the men who have the care of them. And do not the English march savages against the French? And have not Frenchmen also wives and children, and even hearts and souls?”

"If it were your bounden duty," she stipulated.

"It is, being my country's opportunity," he argued.

"If it had been that ye could na turn back — that your help had been pledged — your honor engaged — your own and your hame to defend ! But to *seek* the foul employ — to lead into the field these merciless fiends against the peaceful hunter and the patient husbandman, the wife and the daughter, the grandame and the babe ! And for what price, Judas ? Is it gold — or is it place ?"

He could kiss her hand, even if it dealt a blow.

"Nay, Lilias," he said, wincing at every thrust. "It is justifiable by all the rules of war ; no honorable soldier need evade the duty. But I will not have you think of me thus. I mean" — taking the plunge of irrevocable revolt, to his own amazement — "I will renounce it; I will resign. I will return to civil life. I will be a planter — a — what you will, and you shall be my wife."

"Your wife!" she exclaimed, and her voice, although steady, rang uncertain of intonation. "Your wife!"

She seemed, to his alert receptiveness, to dwell lingeringly, fondly, on the words. But after a moment she went on unfalteringly, —

"Oh, man ! you 'd break faith with king and country to win favor with a woman !"

He was staggered for an instant.

"It would be no loss to the government. They would only send another officer to fill my place."

He hesitated in a sudden jealous speculation as to who might succeed to the result of his careful work and the rewards of his hard-earned opportunity. Then he resumed with eager urgency, "But you think my orders are revolting and the service unholy. You account my engagements with the French government inconsistent with my honor" —

"It is na what *I* think, but what are they to you — naething ? — naething ?"

"Nothing in comparison with my love for you; nothing in comparison with my gratitude for your love for me. For, Liliias, you love me; surely you love me!"

She had risen, and still standing, she suddenly put both hands before her eyes.

"Oh, puir Tam Wilson!" she cried, and burst into a tumult of tears.

The irrelevance stunned him as he stood staring at her.

"But you are na Tam Wilson!" She turned upon him in a sort of fury, throwing out one hand at arm's length with a gesture of repudiation. "Oh, you are na Tam Wilson! Oh, the leal heart *he* had! He wad na gie ower his trust and renounce his pledges and quit his country's wark for ony lassie alive! He could na be balked by fear, an' he could na be bought by favor. And if God prospered him he thankit Him for his mercies! And if God denied him he thankit Him for his chastening! And when in the gude time his wife suld come to him, 't would be as a help-meet, as 't was ordained,— to go hand in hand in an honorable path, to work togither, building up, not throwing down, keeping faith, not breaking it,— open as the day, hiding naething and with naething to hide. And she would be dear, but his honor would be dearer! He wad na win a woman's heart wi' vain protestations an' false names, and wi' terrible secret military orders to haud him back,— and then tell her that his engagements were naught to him for *her* sake! For she might tell him, as I tell you, an oath's an oath, and ill to break! And I will hae naught to do wi' a man wha wad break it for the blink o' a lassie's eye! *He* wad na do that—oh, puir Tam Wilson!"

He stood aghast, arraigned, conscience-stricken. But she had leaned against the crag, her soft cheek pressed on the stern gray rock, relinquishing her reproaches and bewailing her bereavement.

"Oh, puir, puir Tam Wilson!" she cried again and

again. "To think *he* never lived! He isna you! He is naebody — naething! Puir Tam Wilson — to think he never lived!"

She would not hear remonstrances. She would not look at Laroche. He was fain presently to leave her in the closing dusk, lest the others might join them when neither could well explain her emotion. As he slipped away in the elusive gathering gray shadows, he still heard her sobs from their midst, bewailing the tenuous estate of puir Tam Wilson, quite as elusive as they.

He did not see her again till the next morning. She was pallid as the result of a sleepless night. Her eyelids, although swollen from persistent weeping, were still heavy with unshed tears. Her face was stern, hard, even sullen. She seemed averse to speech and answered her father's expressions of alarm because of her grief-stricken manner and Callum's eager solicitous inquiries as to her well-being with a curt explanation, "I hae had dreams."

Laroche, who had had time for reflection, appreciated an undercurrent of a more subtle sincerity in the response than was obvious from the surface. Dreams indeed — mere dreams! Puir Tam Wilson!

He was glad of the relief which this apt reply afforded him, for he had suffered some mundane and most personal anxieties, in view of her youth and inexperience in diplomatic matters, as to her capability to guard his disclosure. Indeed he was doubtful of her disposition to shield him since her emotion had been so strongly elicited and the unexpected resultant repulsion for him had so completely offset her prepossession hitherto in his favor, on which he had relied for protection. His liberty, and even his life, were in her hands, and he could hardly contain his regret that he had confided aught to her.

There is no repentance so sharp as that which arises from a mistake made in a presumable excess of conscientiousness.

He told himself now that acting in the discharge of his political and official duty he might well have left events to take their own course. If he had parted with her, revealing naught of the true identity of puir Tam Wilson, she could hardly have pined more for the man himself than for the figment of her fancy. Callum had scarcely a more definite rival in the substance than in the shadow. If the two young people could not come to an understanding with the memory of the man between them, they could hardly now have a unity of interest separated by the myth.

But the dreams that she had had, of which he was acutely conscious of being a visionary part, and her fractious, imperious temper served to account for much childish petulance in her conduct toward all who approached her. She waved away the horse on which she had hitherto ridden, when the animal was brought forward, ready saddled for her use. She would not speak, nor would she mount.

"Oh fie! oh fie!" exclaimed Jock Lesly, as in duty bound. Then in dulcet solicitude, "Winna ma poppet ride her pillion? Hey, Duncan, Dougal,—Miss Liliás's pillion!"

And then it became evident that on this pillion she would in no wise ride behind Callum, who was only too officious to proffer his services; nor Tam Wilson, whose proposition, despite a secret reluctance, was made with all needful show of alacrity. Therefore the pillion was strapped behind Jock Lesly's saddle, and when mounted there Liliás leaned her head against his broad shoulder and wept silently from time to time and desisted to clasp both arms as tightly as possible around his broad girth with a childish but joyless hug, feeling, nevertheless, that here was the only stanch heart in all the world, the only one whose love was of any value. Then she would fall to weeping again, and pause to take pleasure in wiping her eyes on the gray and flaxen wisps of his plaited hair, hanging down on his shoulders

within her reach. So often was his hair devoted to the sad duty of drying her tears that the locks came unplaited and escaped from the leather thong that tied them, so that she needs must plait them over again. This she did, using both hands and sustaining her weight on the pillion by holding to the hair of the suffering scalp of her father, who, much tormented lest she fall, punctuated the performance with adjurations — “Oh fie ! oh fie !”

Presently he would feel her head, once more lying against his shoulder, shaken by the tumult of her sobs, and in a bewildered effort at consolation he would admonish her, “Whist — whist, hinny ! Dreams are naething ! but maist like sour sowens for supper. Dreams are naething !”

“Naething !” she would respond ambiguously. “Naething ! Oh, that I suld say so ! Dreams are naething at a’ !”

She did not speak to Laroche again except upon the day of his departure, which he had expedited as far as he might without incurring comment. She was riding her own horse again, and when she pressed the animal up abreast with him in the cavalcade, he felt his heart glow within him. He had loved her, truly and purely, and with a sort of tender lenient admiration, and he warmed to the thought of bearing away with him some word of friendship that would make the remembrance of her less like a flagellation than a grief both sad and sweet and to be tenderly cherished. For she could not be aware that he had revealed his military and national status without intending to confess his love merely to stem the tide of her own.

There was a touch of pride in the poise of her head. Yet it was always carried high, in truth. Her eyes flashed. They were always at their brightest when they looked out thus, gleaming like sapphires upon the variant blue of the distant mountain ranges. The day was fair, the wind went by with a rush, and her smile was as bland as the sun on

the expanse of vernal foliage in the valley beneath the verge of the path as they rode adown the rugged ravines.

"They tell me you are gaun to quit us the day," she said suavely.

"Aye, and sorry am I," he replied with polite alacrity.

She made a gesture as of flouting a triviality.

"Why suld mortals be glad or sorry?" she said. "Their fate is a' fixed, whether they will or no. And they go to meet it — ane might a'most say — without mair knowledge o' its nearness than kyloes hae o' the shambles."

She paused for a moment. Then quickly resumed as if she neither expected nor desired response.

"But mony folks try to speer out the future, and tak muckle heed o' signs an' sic-like, especial o' ill luck. Ye hae heard us speak o' thae strange warnin's that appear in the likeness o' a man's nainsel' — but I misdoubts these are only auld wives' clavers; I misdoubts. I want to tell you this," — she turned upon him a casual but radiant smile, — "if e'er you hap to see a man comin' till you that looks like yoursel', ye needna be frightened, for it winna be Tam Wilson. Tak my word for it — it winna be Tam Wilson!"

She reined in her horse and fell back among the others, while he rode on feeling his heart thrust through with the stabs of her deliberate cruelty; and these were all the farewell words that passed between them.

IX

PERHAPS no man ever lived a tragedy of thought and feeling, unrelated to the conditions and professions of his merely material life, more consciously than did Laroche. Flung back perforce on his military character, every pulse ached with the straining against those professional chains, the fragments of which, had they broken in the stress, he would with loyal perversity have hugged. Yet since they held fast, he pined for Jock Lesly, for the simple household, for the humble domestic habitudes and the hearthside atmosphere, for the chaste yet alluring presence of Lilius. Many a day after he had seen the trader's cavalcade fare downward through the bosky ravine, becoming dim and diminishing as it went, flickering among the shadows seeming as immaterial as they, finally vanishing indistinguishably in their midst, he could behold it anew in freshest tints and near at hand whenever the wish — or alack, the unruly fancy — brought it to mind again. Long after the echoes had ceased to repeat the hearty halloo of farewell, the last of many regretful tokens of parting, he was wont to hear these voices in song or breezy talk or affectionate greeting as of yore.

Yet he had scant time for this as he rode back to Ioco Town, for it is needless to say the projected detour to Virginia was never really in contemplation. Moy Toy was obviously jealous of his self-absorption and silence, and had become captious under the enforced relinquishment of the trader's party as his lawful prey. He was more impatient still of the necessary delays that must ensue before the

Cherokees could be in case to strike a blow in revenge for all their disasters, plainly registered in the charred tenantless towns here and there on the face of the ravaged landscape. Laroche sought to divert his mind, to placate him anew, to excite his interest. In devising subjects of talk the Frenchman often attempted to sound the depths of the Cherokee character and definitely gauge the capacities of the tribe to receive and assimilate the values of civilization, that thereby he might deduce something of the force that their national traits would exert in the destinies of this great continent. For instance, he would argue with Moy Toy upon the Indian aversion to the stability and permanence of architecture.

“The white man like the Indian can live but a day — why should his house outlast him ?” the chief would protest stolidly.

“For those who come after, — since houses congregate into cities, and cities erect nations, and nations continue throughout ages, and ages are aggregations of strength. What is done in a day lasts but a day,” retorted the soldier.

Thus speculatively disposed he would seek to measure the extent and divine the catastrophe of that ancient prehistoric civilization of which his keen instinct read much in the scattered fragments along the shores of Time : in the aboriginal traditions, unique and indefinitely antique ; in the ceremonials, of which the significance was lost in degeneracy, retaining but the manner without the matter, the shapeless shadow of an unimagined symmetry ; in the language, absolutely individual, he thought, with copious verbal forms and facile locutions, with orderly construction, with subtle shades of minutely diverse meanings, with large and sonorous adaptation to high themes ; in the religion, with its elaborate theory of symbolism without the vital spark. He wondered how far this definite cult, seeming almost

inherent, would deter the Cherokees from a conversion to Christianity. He doubted this result because of their earnest observance of the ritual of their ancient religion and implicit faith in its sanctities. Yet Moy Toy was himself the suavest of postulants, the most promising of catechumens. So eagerly he listened to the French officer who explained the grounds of his own belief and its revolutionizing effects upon the nations of all the world — not failing to turn and scan the number of tribesmen in the band from time to time, to make sure that none had followed with treacherous intentions the trader's train — that many another man as discerning as Laroche yet less crafty might have been deceived.

Over the camp-fires at night especially Moy Toy seemed to delight in repeating some of the more simple and discursive details of the day's talk, often startling Laroche by his powers of memory, the accuracy of his comprehension, and his gift of mimicry. Laroche wondered if a preference which he noted for biographical details might be ascribed to that fraternizing instinct to realize the conditions of the life of man in whatever age or country, despite the lapse of time and the barriers of distance, that attests the universal brotherhood, and if it was this which had served to invest the narrations with such reality and had so strengthened the grasp of his mind upon them. The officer found, however, a curious flavor of speculation in the fact that try as he might he could not enlist this vivid interest in the incidents of the New Testament. The sanguinary histories of the Old Testament, dealing oft with force and fraud, met with no skeptical reservations or evasions from Moy Toy. The motives they adduced were eminently comprehensible to him, the result credible, and his attitude of mind applaudive. But with the gospel of love and meekness, the forgiveness of injuries and succor of enemies, the dictates of self-sacrifice and self-denial, the savage had no pulse in unison.

Moy Toy listened as his obvious policy required. Sometimes he commented.

"Christianity is to make the red men good? Then tell me, why has it not made the white men good? — they have had it so long — seventeen hundred years, you say, and more!"

And the French officer, fairly routed, could only answer that the race had not lived up to its best opportunity.

The chief's interest in the ethical phase of the subject often flagged, however, beyond the power of simulation. It was only held to a pretense of attention by the inexorable etiquette of the Cherokee, however prolix his interlocutor, and an occult intention to master certain knowledge by the ruse of surprise, as it were. But inborn subtlety is no match for the ratiocination of cultivation, and Moy Toy's instinct was fatally at fault when with a child-like blandness and irrelevance he casually demanded, "How was it, did you say last night, that the good San Quawl made his powder when he journeyed down to the city of Damascus?" or "I have forgotten how many pounds of powder you said the brave chief Samson put under the gates of Gaza when he blew them up to carry them off."

The trail of the earnest dominant desire to discover that seigneurial secret of civilization that made it the lord of the world, the conqueror of force, the despot of right, the annihilator of numbers, — the simple formula for the manufacture of gunpowder, the materials for which Laroche had already assured him abounded in the Cherokee country, — lay through all the devious windings of their talk, and divulged the springs of self-interest in Moy Toy's affectations of the dawning of faith.

On each occasion the revulsion of the officer's feeling was so great that the betrayal of the Indian's motive in searching the Scriptures, and his conviction that the ultimate value of the white man's religion lay in his superior

knowledge of destructive explosives, failed to excite any cynical amusement in Laroche, and roused in him a very genuine indignation. For the demonstration always came as a surprise in its devious methods, half incredulous though he was as to the eventual conversion of the Indian.

"Let it be accounted to me for righteousness that I do not instantly give you over!" Laroche would cry angrily.

It was essentially the pulse of the church militant which animated the soldier. His patience was scant, his summons imperative. "Become a Christian, or I'll be the death of you!" might be a just translation of his urgency.

And in good sooth his easily excited anger was so obviously genuine on each recurrent presentation of the lure to entrap him into the disclosure of the secret which he had promised in his own good time to communicate, that Moy Toy experienced a very definite alarm lest by his precipitancy the precious knowledge that gave the white man his supremacy might be snatched from the Indian forever. With his naturally keen faculties thus whetted, Moy Toy evolved with countercraft a diversion that appealed irresistibly to the speculative phase of Laroche's intellect and for a time led him captive, although he appreciated fully the trickery of the intention and the treachery of the heart of his interlocutor.

This was the recital of the Cherokee traditions of the more ancient Scriptural events, — the creation, the flood, the exodus, — knowledge of which the earliest travelers in this region found already implanted among that singular people, and, with certain analogous customs, serving to add so much plausibility to the theory of its Hebraic origin — even yet to be accounted for by vague hypotheses such as the teachings of Cabeza de Vaca among the more southern tribes, thence transmitted northward. If this be the source of these traditions, it is singular, to say the least, that there should be among them none of the essential truths of the

new dispensation nor Roman Catholic legends of the saints. Laroche could but lend heedful attention to the variant details of the Cherokee version of the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, and now and again pointed out to Moy Toy their divergencies from the true and only word, and much he meditated upon this strange disclosure as he rode along the woodland ways, listening in his turn.

Sometimes he sought to modify or adjust the sacred writings of the old dispensation to the interpretative temper of the new, always held in check by the Cherokee version which Moy Toy would repeat with controversial relish, keeping pace *haut passibus aquis*. For the savage, obdurate to the wile of civilization, was yet more steeled against the advance of the Christian religion; and indeed modern instances are not wanting, sufficiently dispiriting to the student of human progress, in which after a lifetime of the profession of Christianity the Cherokee in his dying hours openly discards the religion of his adoption and departs to the happy hunting-grounds in the faith of his fathers, going out of the world the pagan that he entered it.

Serious as was the subject that absorbed Laroche's thoughts, the deep significance of his speculations, comprising the origin of this race, its perverted destiny, the intentions of the Deity, this strange glimpse into the mystic past, the darker mystery of the veiled future,—these mighty interests could not suffice to sustain that human heart of his when they passed once more the trading-house, silent and deserted at Ioco Town, and the cottage hard by, where he had lived out the sweets of the little romance snatched from untoward conditions. He smiled sadly and tenderly at the thoughts conjured up by the evening glow so red on the gable against the blue sky. Never again would the fire flash forth from that deserted hearthstone to lure the wanderer home. Never again would the gleam of the candle rejoice the hospitable board that welcomed the stranger.

The ingleside was cold and bleak, and would soon be a wreck, for the Indians were now giving the roof to the torch, and he watched the blaze with many a sentimental pang, but did not offer remonstrance. Better thus! Far better thus! It was well that Jock Lesly should not be tempted back by the knowledge that his old nest still awaited him here, for the stout heart of the Scotch trader would credit no less definite a portent of continued danger than charred timbers and sacked dwelling. And Laroche honestly believed that the day of the great British trade on the Tennessee and its neighboring streams was over-past now and forever.

He did not hesitate when once more at Tellico Great to inaugurate the scheme, the progress of which had been delayed months ago by the defection of Mingo Push-koosh. For it was here on the banks of the Tennessee that he at last recovered his old identity, lost in that sweet and soft thrall of a hopeless love. He felt again a free man, albeit the glories of the evening star in the saffron west moved him strangely. He threw himself ardently into all those plans so long in abeyance of equipping an army of the confederated tribes, — the Choctaw, the Muscogee, the Cherokee, and many minor bands, — and the problems of securing munitions of war, of the transmission of supplies, and of the apportionment of forces absorbed his every faculty. Continually his messengers were going to and fro in the Indian country, and his pettiaugres dared the currents of those swift difficult rivers, now and again running the gauntlet of the musketry of the inimical Chickasaws from some high bluff. Secretly, silently, the preparations went on like the gathering mute menace of a sullen storm whose ferocity must burst with an added fury from its long repression. All unsuspected it might have been, although the expectation was so widely extended, save for the arrogant boastfulness of some far-away Indian, drunk perhaps, in a British trading-house or the bloody culmination of an individual feud

between a warrior and a white settler, the savage unable to restrain his vengeful anticipation and abide the accepted time.

Fantastic and impotent as this tenuous scheme may seem now, long ago shredded by the mere wind of the flight of time, a forgotten fantasy, not to be more considered than the snares of any humble spider of to-day throwing its fragile enmeshments from crag to crag on the banks of the Tennessee, it struck cold terror to the hearts of the royal governors of the adjacent British provinces. The Spaniard, insolent and powerful, openly menaced them on the south, and with the combination of the French and Indians they were surrounded and without recourse. They had little to hope from one another, save perhaps an unacknowledged aspiration on the part of each that the other might first tempt the attack of the designing projector of the new Indian alliance and serve as a sop to Cerberus. Each was in terror of a plea of assistance from the other, for the colonies themselves lacked that strength which comes from union and which Laroche sought to instill into the policy of the tribes. Each province being incapable of self-defense with its weak, untrained militia, its inadequate supplies of munitions of war, its vast wildernesses and stretches of unfortified frontier, was averse to dividing its slight resources. Roused, however, to the terror lest immediate massacre of outlying stationers ensue, a consultation was held and a remonstrance, adroit, sugared, promising yet threatening withal, addressed by the Governor of South Carolina to Cunigacatgoah⁸ of Choté, now the nominal head of the Cherokee government, was framed and sent by the hand of one of the Kooasahte Indians, who chanced to be in Charlestown, with whose tribe the Cherokees were now at peace.

He returned after a swift journey with a most pacific answer, protesting and reproachful, Cunigacatgoah demanding

to be informed of a single infraction of the terms of the treaty, bating, of course, wild, irresponsible rumors. If the governor could cite one such for which the nation could be fairly considered responsible, he would himself come down to Charlestown to answer for it in person.

Governor Boone, surprised yet reassured by the unexpected character of this reply, sought to further assuage his anxiety by catechising his messenger as to the state of matters in the Cherokee country. He found the mind of the Kooasahte, never forceful at best, in that flighty, agitated state to be described as all agog. Obviously the man had been immensely impressed by what he had seen and been able to learn. By no means willing to disclose all, still his eyes were opened to new possibilities of savage ascendancy. Under adroit cross-examination he divulged extraordinary suggestions of the suddenly developed magnificence of Moy Toy of Tellico and of the wonderful powers of a strange magician who was Moy Toy's friend, yet whom he affirmed was a white man, and whose nationality he accidentally disclosed as French.

Whereupon Governor Boone grew more mystified than before. Finally he bethought himself to send for Jock Lesly as one who, having been intimately acquainted with the personnel and conditions of the Cherokee country for years past, might perchance explain the inconsistency of all these antagonistic details.

The doughty Scotch trader had accounted the burning of his buildings and the plunder of his goods, of which he had been informed indirectly by rumor, as but an accident or a bit of unwarranted and wanton mischief, and by no means as the definite threat that Laroche had supposed he would perceive therein. His daughter, however, had insisted that the demonstration was inimical and in no wise to be braved. Jock Lesly enjoyed much domestic oratory in these days which his "Whist, whist, my bairn!" was powerless to

silence, and feminine logic won the battle when she persisted that if he returned to Ioco Town she would accompany him, for if it were safe for him it was safe for her! Thereupon he hauled down his flag; and now as he needs must rebuild wherever he should go, he was idly awaiting in Charlestown a propitious opportunity of reëstablishment elsewhere under more permanent conditions.

Jock Lesly, cocking his sharp blue eyes at the cringing Kooasahte, a degenerate specimen of a warlike tribe, obviously regarded the whole history of his visit as a fable.

“Gin your excellency wad forgie the freedom, the man is a beautiful liar!”

“Was there no white man there when you left?”

“Nane, sir—that is—forbye a bit chiel o’ a Firginian on his way hame—he had cam doun wi’ a wheen o’ neighbors to herd up some stray horses that had been sold to the Williamsburg region and had gane back to their auld grass in the Cherokee country. He fell ailin’, an’ his friends went on wi’ the horses an’ lef’ him amang the Injuns,—an’ he foregathered wi’ us. He cam part o’ the way hame wi’ us, but struck aff a considerable way aboon Fort Prince George to go aff to Firginia.”

“He could not be this man, you think? Does he speak French?”

“He? Tam Wilson speak French?” exclaimed Jock Lesly, with a hearty rollicking laugh in his enjoyment of his superior discernment. “Your excellency disna ken thae carles out on the frontier! Tam Wilson ha’ enow to do to speer his wull in English,—puir fallow!”

This seemed definitive; Jock Lesly therefore was presently dismissed, and the gratuity which the Kooasahte received was of limited value and quality, which he had not expected nor had the governor intended, because he had told the truth, which chanced to be unwelcome and discredited. He went away, his heart hot within him, sending forth fumes

of rum, which the present sufficed to procure, and sedition, which the present was not adequate to annul.

Meanwhile life on the banks of the Tennessee at Tellico Great flowed on as gently as the river. Laroche had received orders to seek adoption into the Cherokee tribe, according to the wont of the intriguing French, that he might thereby recruit his influence and improve his control. Thus he could better restrain their bellicose demonstrations till the time was ripe for revolt, lest precipitancy annul its values. Hence he became officially a Cherokee.

That singular atmosphere of fraternity peculiar to the Indian method of adoption encompassed Laroche like a native element. It seemed no longer inspired by self-interest. He was as one of the nation, — theirs in success or defeat, theirs in weal or woe ! He had polled his head and painted his face and donned their garb. He had been initiated into their mysteries and had accepted their religion ; for the Cherokees were no idolaters, and without mockery he could bow in worship to a Great Spirit, albeit with many a mental reservation and evasion in the ceremonies in which he participated. His suspicions were never allayed, — but they were in his mind, not in theirs, — and he was not the more content. Now and again as he danced with the braves in three circles on the sandy spaces of the “beloved square” to the shrilling of a flute, fashioned of the tibia of a deer, and to the thunderous drone of the earthen drums, while strange figures such as might grace pandemonium whirled about him, — hardly human figures ; some with grotesquely frightful masks of gourds hiding faces scarcely less hideous ; some almost nude ; some smeared over with unguents as a groundcoat to make adhere a medley of feathers and foster the semblance of gigantic birds, — a great repulsion would seize him ; every civilized pulse would clamor against these uncouth follies, against the sacrifice of time and identity and wonted usage in this cause ; and he would feel that the

destruction of all the British colonies, could it be compassed, was not worth the price which he paid. The recollection of the sane, orderly customs of the life to which he was native rose up before him with a sentiment of reproach, as one might feel in ascertaining the realities in the lucid interval of some tormenting mania. He was abashed by the mere contemplation of the mountains rising on every side, silent, austere, as majestically aloof from the farce which he enacted as the sky above or the world — the civilized world that he had known and loved — far, far away.

To add to his discomforts the interval which he was to spend thus was destined to be longer than had been anticipated. Aggressive measures were again postponed, and his activities suspended by orders which he received from New Orleans. For it had latterly been developed that the British government contemplated securing a considerable cession of land from the Cherokees, thinking that in thus increasing its holding in the Indian country to keep the tribe more definitely under its domination and influence, and to quiet the title to certain territory, on which they claimed the government had encroached. The French, with their resources much exhausted by the Seven Years' War, now slowly dragging its length along, were almost crippled in America for the lack of ready cash, and their plans for the Cherokees would be considerably recruited by the purchase money of the land thus poured into the tribal coffers. The wily Indians were enchanted with so hopeful a prospect of securing the means to purchase sufficient arms and ammunition to repel the British and attain their old independence anew. Though they had never doubted the will of the French government in Louisiana to forward these measures, its capacity to furnish adequate ammunition had failed signally more than once.

At this period, while Larochie was awaiting decisive advices from New Orleans, the progress of events seemed sus-

pended. Hope, anxiety, fear were in abeyance. He spent much time in the perfecting of the details of his plan and in the correspondence incident to the enterprise. As he grew more wearied with the monotonous association with the Indians, he took advantage of his leisure to send long discursive letters to his comrades in the southern forts whenever he chanced to have a messenger going that way, — to Captain Pierre Chabert at Fort Tombecbé or the Chevalier Lavnoué at Fort Toulouse.

Cold, wet weather set in late in the summer, a long, dreary, unseasonable interval. When the rains came down in thin, persistent, fibrous lines, and the surface of the river palpitated and throbbed beneath its multitudinous touches, and the gathering gray mists half shrouded then half revealed those endless lengths of dark-hued solemn mountains, and the trees dripped drearily, and the wind surged and sobbed amidst their boughs, the susceptible Frenchman reached the lowest ebb of his isolation, his dissatisfaction, and his yearning wish to feel again the throbbing pulse of civilization.

Thus it was that for many hours of those chill nights in the quaint winter-house, without window or chimney, while the rain would pour down the conical earthen roof, resounding like a drum, he would seek for solace in writing those long letters to his military friends describing his plight, and commenting on the news of the day received chiefly through their responses.

All unmindful of him and his occupations, the other inmates of the house lay sleeping, stretched in a line, on the couch of cane that ran along the red clay walls of the circular room, behind the row of pillars which upheld the conical roof. Even the heads were covered with the wolfskins and bearskins that formed the drapery of their elastic cane mattresses. All unmindful of him they were — all except Moy Toy.

The fire would flare up now and again, showing the colonnade of pillars, the cane couch, and above, the circular wall of the rich red hue of the clay of that country, with here and there upon it quaint hieroglyphics in parti-colored paints, or a decorated buffalo hide suspended, or a curiously carven pipe of stone with some famous scalp attached, while the scroll-like thin blue smoke eddied overhead, pressing closer and closer to its exit at the smoke hole. All gradually flickered and dulled and blurred into a dusky red glow in which naught was distinguishable but vague reminiscent shadows, the mass of smouldering coals in the centre of the floor, and the spirited blond Gallic face of Laroche with his incongruous Indian garb, bending intent, eager, absorbed, above the page as he wrote. Not till the page also grew dim would he rouse himself and throw off the gathering ashes. Then as the responsive flame leaped up white and vivid, he would look back along the paper to review the last paragraphs, and with a freshened brightness of aspect apply himself anew to his task. Moy Toy's keen eye had grown to distinguish a certain difference of expression when the military expert wrought upon the problems of his enterprise, — the alert, elevated look, puzzled now and then, but intellectual, powerful, confident, and in contrast the twinkling eye, the sarcastic curving lip, the sly, devil-may-care, gibing nod, and yet sometimes the plaintive dejection with which he made those "black marks" which he sent away to his correspondents in the southern forts.

"You are my friend, the friend of my heart, and you know everything," Moy Toy once said suddenly out of the dreary midnight, when the dizzy rain was whirling abroad in a witch's dance with the wind, the mountains were lost in the density of night, and the river had become but a voice in the vast voids of the outer atmosphere.

Laroche looked up suddenly from where he sat on a buffalo rug before the red glow of the coals. He wrote upon

one knee, but the inkhorn was close by on the floor, and he placed one hand over it, in careful forethought, that a friendly dog, nosing about with the conviction that it held refection of worth, might not overturn it. However Laroche's hair was clipped it sprang anew and there was a curling fringe under the edge of his cap, which was fashioned of otter fur and bordered with white swan's feathers. His hunting-shirt was of otter fur and his leggings of buck-skin heavily fringed and terminating in a pair of buskins; these were dyed scarlet and gayly decorated with quills. His face, with its expression of intellectual absorption, was inconceivably at variance with his attire and the place. He said nothing, but his hazel eyes looked an expectant inquiry, and seeing him silent Moy Toy spoke again.

"Wonderful friend! though your knowledge is no more to be moved or shaken than the mountains, yet you have the changeable countenance."

"It is you who know everything!" said Laroche, laughing, but very distinctly embarrassed.

Moy Toy, encouraged by this appreciation, began to put his impressions into words. "When you make black marks on those papers which you treasure, and which I am sure must belong to your beautiful artillery, or else to make powder, or perhaps to the fine plans for the great fort which we are to have here one day, your face is the same it has always been, and as those who love you must love to see it. But when you write the black marks which you send to the commandants of the forts in the south, your eyes grow little, and they twinkle, and your mouth is pursed for lies, and you nod your head with a risky air, and you look more wicked than clever!"

Laroche listened in silence. Then suddenly he burst out laughing. He hastily suppressed the tone of loud hilarity, for one of the sleepers stirred and turned, but fell a-snoring again.

"It is the commandants who are wicked," he said, smiling retrospectively. "I answer them only in their own vein — sardonic, witty, half-malicious fellows."

"And what makes them so wicked?"

"They are so close to the English, perhaps, — they learn all they know from the English."

Moy Toy gazed at the smiling face with a doubtful anxiety, some withheld thought, a half formed purpose in abeyance.

Laroche had had occasion to note that jealousy of the "black marks" of civilization which seemed to animate all the Indians of that day, powerless to restrain this mysterious opportunity of communicating the most secret thought a thousand miles by the stroke of a pen. He had been somewhat irked to discover in addition a sort of pettish tribal jealousy on the part of Moy Toy toward this interest in the southern forts. The chief desired that the officer's entire attention should be concentrated on the welfare of the Cherokee nation, and deprecated that any advancement or opportunity should be afforded through his means to the various Alabama tribes congregated about those forts. Laroche was an adopted Cherokee, and why should he so delight in writing to the forts *aux Alibamons*!

It had always seemed to Laroche that the intercepting of a letter was essentially a civilized emprise, but the process was invented, as it were, in the brain of this specious Indian. As the commandants of Fort Tombecbé and Fort Toulouse knew so much about the wicked English, perhaps it was not well to keep longer between the folds of the soft panther and wolf skins that formed the furnishings of the couch of the chief a missive addressed to Lieutenant Jean Marie Edouard Bodin de Laroche, and sealed with a big official splash of wax.

"Here," said Moy Toy, without the least confusion as he produced it, "I thought too many times you nodded your

head toward Fort Toulouse and you might soon speak with the forked tongue of Lavnoué. But perhaps he may tell the truth when his heart weighs heavy with the thought of the English."

Laroche stared with amazed displeasure. The color rose indignantly to his cheeks. He was about to utter a vehement remonstrance, but paused to break the seal which should have parted under his fingers three weeks earlier. Then he forgot this encroachment upon his vested rights.

For the letter was a warning, heralding the approach of British soldiers.

X

THERE stood a quaint, grotesque figure in the midst of the level spaces about Chilhowee, Old Town. It maintained its stiff, stanch pose alike through shadow and sheen ; oblivious of night or day ; unmindful of the rain that the sudden mountain storms now and again sent surging down from over the summit of the Chilhowee Range, looming high above ; disdainful of the wind that fluttered the fringes of its buckskin shirt and leggings and slanted the feathers of its war-bonnet askew, and flouted and buffeted its aged, painted, fantastic face.

So like a grim old warrior in good truth was the adroitly constructed effigy that Callum MacIlvesty long remembered the day when first he beheld it upon entering the Cherokee town of Chilhowee, and was moved to wrath because of its surly, important, inimical attitude and fixed aggressive stare. Only the closest scrutiny enabled him to realize that it was but a scarecrow, albeit the cleverest of its type, with a painted gourd for a head and a gaudily arrayed body of fagots and straw. But he did not then even vaguely divine that he was ever to hold a closer association with the image, or that years afterward and far away the mere recollection of its aspect in his sleeping fancies would wake him to a breathless fright and dreary reminiscences of a most troublous episode in a chequered history.

The scene was bright with the varying luminosity of the azure tints of the mountains of the distance ; nearer the hue of the wooded heights deepened to the richest autumnal crimson and bronze as they drew close about the gap where

the Tennessee River flows through the Great Smoky Mountains and pierces the Chilhowee Range to the very heart. The metallic lustre of the water was now like silver, now like steel, and again showed a burnished copper glister where its surges had washed a bank of red clay; occasionally a white drift of swans was on its current, or a deer swam gallantly across; and once a group of buffaloes, pausing to drink at the margin, lifted their heads, apparently as unafraid as tame neat cattle, to gaze with a dull bovine curiosity at the party of equestrians and the detachment of British foot-soldiers on the opposite shore.

All the ancient Cherokee customs were still in vogue, although destined soon to fall away with a suddenness that confounds history and almost baffles tradition, suggesting, indeed, the instantaneous transition to dust of some prehistoric skeleton at the first touch of the disintegrating air. Even at that date, however, with the obvious doom of evanescence upon them, a certain curiosity concerning them was very general among those equipped for the archaic speculations in which Laroche had found an interest; there was a general quickening of the pace of the horses as several riders closed about a sedate, middle-aged personage, spare and tall, of great length of limb and evident strength and toughness, who wore a suit of buckskin and was a surveyor of long experience on the frontier, and who proceeded to explain the reason for the extraordinary *vraisemblance* of the effigy.

"The Indians have aye a crafty turn," he said. In illustrating this fact he narrated how the "second man" of the town, "a bailiff belike," induced the young people to believe that the scarecrow was the reincarnated spirit of an ancient warrior, an ancestor, who had come back to overlook their work. Keeping them at a sufficient distance, the "second man" was wont to tell wonderful stories of the exploits of the mythical warrior of Chilhowee, the evil influences of his

anger against the idle, and the benefits of pleasing him by industry. The women and girls would believe this, and thus to song and story the work would go merrily on.

The gentleman directly addressed by the surveyor was apparently of a higher and more fastidious grade. He was sprucely arrayed in brown cloth of a trim cut and a fine texture, with a cocked hat, dapper yet sober. His fresh pink cheek and chin were smoothly shaven, the first slightly wrinkled, the latter cleft with a line that duplicated its contours. His black "solitaire" was accurately adjusted about his neck. His bag-wig was the most decorous appendage of that fantastic sort that ever swung behind a well-furnished and elaborately trained brain. That he was the exponent of some kind of careful scientific learning was apparent to the most undiscerning wight at the first glance. Indeed, the English surveyor in offering this bit of information as to Indian customs was making but a scant return for the largess of botanical lore that had strewn the way from Charlestown full five hundred miles thicker than ever were leaves in Vallombrosa.

As the botanist contemplated the broad fields in cultivation he began to speak. "This pompion, now,—the variety of *Cucurbita Pepo*,—that the Indians grow,"—and at the phrase a British officer resplendent in scarlet coat, white breeches, cocked hat, and powdered hair, with a look of shocked revolt checked his horse so suddenly as to throw the animal back upon the haunches and to discommode the advance of the infantry escort that followed, consisting of thirty English soldiers of his own company and a detachment of twenty Scotch Highlanders.

If Lieutenant John Francis Everard could, he would have banished from the memory of man all Latin plant names, for before he was fifty miles out from Charlestown he was glutted with information concerning the vegetable products of the earth on which he lived. He felt that had he a

retroactive power in cosmogony this world should have been created a leafless ball. From the beginning of the march his spirit quailed in the presentiment of the tortures of learned converse that were destined to wreck the pleasure and almost the possibility of the expedition. Indeed, it was only the second day out that he summoned Callum MacIlvesty from the ranks of the marching Highlanders and bending down nearly to the saddle bow said in a bated voice of consternation, "Callum Bane, do you see that old man ? Why," in an appalled staccato, "he is almost as bad as ex-Governor Ellis of Georgia!" By which he meant to imply almost as learned, member of almost as many scientific associations, perhaps even a fellow of the Royal Society, almost as acute in making observations, atmospheric, botanic, geologic, almost as industrious in jotting them down, almost as oblivious of the gayer and more frivolous interests of life.

To Lieutenant Everard was intrusted the command of this small military force to escort certain commissioners appointed by the government to the Cherokee country for the purpose of treating with the Indians concerning the projected cession of land, which was not made, however, for several years thereafter, because of an incident of much significance here chronicled — in fact not until 1768. In view of the doubtful temper of the Cherokees and the unsettled state of the country, it was exclusively and comprehensively his duty to see to it that the heads of these gentlemen were unmolested, with their brains securely inside and their scalps securely outside, nor were they expected in return to minister in any degree to his entertainment. But it is not too much to say that Lieutenant Everard would have regarded a brisk brush with Indian enemies with less awe, despite his slight numerical strength, than the ponderous themes, the weighty presence, the worshipful gravity of the commissioners of the crown. There was not a conversable person among them, in the estimation of the gay

and dapper lieutenant, and the march thither and back, with the negotiations at Choté, was calculated to occupy a matter of many weeks. The surveyor was of the same ultra-sober type, and the subordinate attendants he considered as unbecoming his society. Of course familiar association with the men of his company, having only their non-commisioned officers, was inappropriate, even if their ruder breeding had not rendered them unacceptable.

Thus it was that after a day or two of floundering out of his element, he was thrown upon Callum MacIlvesty for solace. For he knew that MacIlvesty, although serving in the ranks, was a man better born and better bred than himself. Of course he was aware that the train of woes, the attainder for treason and forfeiture of estates, following the rebellions of 1715 and 1745, wrecking a number of noble families, brought to the ground the branches as well as the parent stem; and in this instance Callum's commanding officer had acquainted Lieutenant Everard with the "gentleman ranker's" name and condition just before their departure from Charlestown, when this small detachment of Highlanders was ordered to reinforce the escort, as they were familiar with the wild country, a number of them having served with the British troops in this region the two preceding years during the Cherokee War.

The forlorn young officer, so grievously solitary in this expedition, soon ceased to ride with the commissioners, and fell into the habit first of riding near the Highlander as Callum MacIlvesty, alert, active, with a vivid interest in life, strode along in the marching column whose fluttering tartans played tag with the wind and whose burnished accoutrements set up a bright kaleidoscopic glitter at the vanishing point of many a winding woodland perspective. When the talk grew more animated and the interest keener, Lieutenant Everard would throw the reins to an orderly and march on foot beside his new-found friend in his lowly place;

whereat the first sergeant of the English detachment would glance at the nearest corporal with meaning eyes, and all adown the column the scarlet elbows of the fours called "battle comrades" would give each other the touch with more emphasis than the effort to march in due alignment necessitated. Often, however, in fact most usually, the whole force marched with the route step, when conversation was admissible and comment freer than before. For it was obviously a derogation from the dignity of a commissioned officer to continue this familiar association with a common soldier and in so far subversive of discipline, and when the crisis came there were those amply prepared to say "I told you so!"

"The lieutenant would n't demean himself by walkin' an' talkin' familiar with a non-com like me," the first sergeant of the English contingent averred. "An' I can't see as I am a worse man or a less loyal subjec' 'cause I ain't got fine, titled kin taken in open rebellion an' attainted o' treason — one of 'em, Callum's great uncle, was executed for treason and his head perched up over a city gate — there yet, for aught I know!"

For this was the fate of many of the good and noble who had adhered to the political faith of their fathers.

The Highlanders of the escort, however, some of whom were rescued from imbroglio on this theme by a simple incapacity to speak or understand a word of English, and who clattered away cheerily enough together in Gaelic, deemed this association no sort of condescension on the part of Lieutenant Everard. So well aware were they of the claims to distinction of sundry ancestors of Callum MacIlvesty that this penniless scion of a line of half mythical Highland princes, extending back in dim procession into the mists of ages, seemed far superior in social status to Lieutenant Everard, whose best prospect was some day to represent a comparatively modern but well-endowed English baronetcy.

Perhaps Everard might have justified his course by the plea that the expedition was not strictly military, and thus permitted some abrogation of strictly military rule. Every detail to insure safety, however, was rigorously observed. When the tents were pitched sentinels were posted, the various guards mounted, all the discipline of a military camp preserved. When on the march scouts were thrown out, and a baggage and rear guard maintained. But, he argued, surely he could not be expected to live so long a time without a being with whom to exchange a congenial word. And if he saw fit to single out a man near his own age, of his own station in life, only constrained to serve in the ranks by reason of poverty because of political misfortunes, he did not conceive that Callum MacIlvesty was lifted out of his place as a soldier and absolved from the duty of obedience because thus admitted, unofficially, to the society of his superior in military rank.

Although both men felt the irking of the anomalous situation, their mutual relish of congenial companionship rendered them adroit in nullifying the difficulty. When Everard gave an order he addressed the Highlander as "MacIlvesty," who simply and implicitly obeyed it as a soldier should. But if Everard spoke to him as "Callum Bane," he received the request as from a friend and complied or not as he chose, for the sobriquet had come to be a mark of friendly familiarity, as it was not necessary on this expedition as a means of identification. While the regiment had not the disaster in nomenclature that beset the corps of the Sutherland Fencibles, in which one hundred and four men answered to the name of "William Mackay," seventeen being in one company, still in the Forty-Second there was much patronymic repetition, and in one company there were three Callum MacIlvestys severally distinguished as "Callum Roy" (the red-haired) and "Callum Dhu" (the dark) and "Callum Bane" (the fair).

This fair-haired Callum seemed an attractive personality to Lieutenant Everard, who felt a compassionate regret that a youngster of such good parts should have no better prospects, for these were the days of the purchase of commissions, and this serious thought was often in Everard's mind as they sat alone beside the camp-fire, making so far as opportunity favored them a convivial night of it. Callum had been grateful for the recognition of his true quality in the humble guise of the private soldier and in the coarse tartan. It was as a salve to his wounded spirit and sense of exile. It had been with a great effort at self-assertion, as a rallying of forces after a defeat, that he had been able to regain in a measure his normal poise, a semblance of his wonted brave cheerfulness, subsequent to his obvious supplantation in the favor of Lilius. Her indifference had pierced him with a pain all the keener because of his ardent sincerity. Perhaps because he had already suffered so much from untoward fate he was endued with the strength to suffer more without succumbing utterly. He was fortunate in the stubborn resources of his indomitable pride. He would not pine like a love-sick girl, he said to himself. He would nerve himself to bear this latest and bitterest fling of fortune like a man. He was the better enabled to meet it with a bold front since the continual exactions of Everard occupied his attention, and left him little time for that silent brooding so pernicious yet so precious to the youth crossed in love. There was an element of humiliation in the situation which seared his sensitive pride like actual fire. Jock Lesly had found his account in the Indian trade, and thus Lilius would have no inconsiderable inheritance, while Callum had naught to offer but his heart, which seemed no great matter after all, and the hand of an ordinary foot-soldier. He had roused himself with a loyal feeling that he owed it to his ancestry, his name, his sense of honor, and of honorable achievements in those who had

gone before, his own unimpeachable record, not to think so meanly of himself; and thus the warm appreciation of his personal qualities and high descent, irrespective of his incongruously humble station which Everard had manifested, the admitted equality of their association, had aided to restore his mental calm and self-respect, and seemed at this crisis more valuable than it could be at any other time.

The responsibility and anxiety consequent upon escorting the party of the commissioners through the country of savages, so inimical and treacherous as Everard had discovered that the Cherokees still were, weighed very sensibly upon the officer's consciousness. Therefore the relaxation at intervals afforded by congenial companionship was all the more acceptable. The tension of the situation augmented the nervous stress of his intolerance of the learned and inopportune disquisitions which the botanist forced continually upon him. He sought to dissemble his displeasure and irritation, however, for he was essentially a gentleman, according to his lights, notwithstanding his repudiation of bigwigs and botany. For all their dullness and slow decorum he had shown every respectful observance to the elderly civilians whom it was his duty to escort, and they, being civilians, thought his choice of a companion very appropriate. They all looked upon Lieutenant Everard with much favor. They could not know, of course, how often he would pause in his talk with Callum, when the two were alone beside the camp-fire, and shake his head with an unutterable thought even to hear the voice of the botanist, the well-known Herbert Taviston, as it was raised in his guarded tent to call out a string of Latin plant names of the growths of the Great Smoky region to another of the commissioners already abed under his own canopy, while the Highlander, whose ills in life were so much grimmer than boredom, laughed in glee at the officer's dismay and disaffection. So often Everard shook his head for this

cause that its decorous powder suffered, and that is saying much. For so perfect of accoutrement was he, so point-device, so solicitous in every detail of dress, that one can hardly think of the fop's dying save in full uniform, as befitting the importance of the occasion. The fact that extremes meet is suggested in the thought that the savages, when going out to battle with another tribe, often importuned the white traders for such attire as would enable them to "make a genteel appearance in English cloth when they died." That the highly civilized Everard would die in his boots was a foregone conclusion, but one is sure that they were elaborately polished whatever the emergency, his burnished sword in his hand, his neckcloth richly laced about his throat, his hair curled according to its graceful wont. It was a very fine head of hair, and for that reason he did not wear the fashionable wig. Of a rich brownish auburn hue, his hair rose up from his forehead in a natural undulation that gave all the fashionable effect; it curled crisply at the sides; it was thick, long, and lent itself with every address to be plaited in a queue at the back. He had brown eyes, darkly lashed, a large aquiline nose, a curling, disdainful, discontented mouth, and a complexion sunburned a permanent scarlet, for despite his fripperies he had seen much service and was by no means a tin soldier. The dashing young officer was a somewhat dazzling exponent of a position and a status which Callum felt to be his own by right, and the simply educated and much denied Highland youth listened greedily to the stories with which Everard sought to beguile the tedium: stories of cosmopolitan life, society, the gay world, the gossip of the times in high circles, London, Paris, Vienna,—for Everard had seen life,—he had seen the world! Sometimes these choice narratives were military, and Callum's pulse would quicken, for he was ambitious of deeds of valor and the opportunity of command. Sometimes the chronicle of Everard's experiences became

boastful and coxcombical, and adroitly suggested other conquests than those of the battlefield.

Nevertheless to Everard the tedium was intolerable. They could not gamble at cards, the reigning vice and pleasure of the day, for the extremity of the poverty of Callum Bane precluded this, and Everard would have been both ashamed and sorry to win his meagre pay. Now and again they played a dreary game without hazard, merely "for the fun of the thing," but Everard found more genuine amusement in object lessons with the cards, in which he elucidated the methods and mysteries of sundry new games, the latest rage, which he had picked up when he was last in London or Paris. This interest palled too after a time, and in reverting to the chronicle of his experiences he was even fain to elaborate questions of the cuisine; he described queer dishes of which he had partaken in out of the way quarters of the world whither his military duties had chanced to carry him; he learnedly compared the abilities of the cooks of different inns and coffee-houses in divers cities; and he vaunted the discrimination and keen discernment of his palate as a judge of wines till the "bouquet," of which he spoke so knowingly, seemed to dispense an actual fragrance to the alert senses of the imaginative listener. None of these subtle refinements appertained to the beverage of which Everard invited Callum's opinion one night as the two boon spirits lingered long about the camp-fire, now and again mending it as it sank, for the hour wore on to the chill of midnight.

"You have to go on guard duty anyhow presently, Callum Bane," the officer said, "so you might as well stay here till the corporal goes out with the relief."

They had been in high glee, and the lieutenant was loath to lose his merry company.

The camp was now pitched at Ioco Town,— by Callum, alack, so well remembered,— west of the Chilhowee Range,

and the English surveyor had offered the lieutenant some particularly fierce tafia, doubtless originally distilled for the Indian trade (against the law), the "fire water" that wrought such woe among the tribes. The sober-minded civilians had not cared to deviate from their usual refreshment of brandy and water or wine which they had brought for their consumption during the journey, but the officer was disposed to experiment. Neither Everard nor Callum was accustomed to this particular drink nor pleased with it, and now and again reverted to the officer's Scotch whiskey, wherein they demonstrated the fact that they were both Britons and compatriots. Then once more they essayed the contemned rum, and again to take the taste out drank the home-brew.

"My certie! it's got the smell o' the peat ontil it!" cried the Scotchman in his simple joy and bibulous patriotism.

Despite his exaltation of the Scotch product, however, the rum had no cause to complain of him when some criticism of the beverage by Everard required that it should be sampled anew, and then they once more sagely conferred together.

That Everard was more irritable than usual was amply manifest in the expression of his uplifted eyes and the cant of his eyebrows when suddenly the learned Herbert Tavistion issued forth all nightcapped from his tent, and, snugly wrapped in a gaudy floriated dressing-gown, once more sought the solace of the fire.

"You seem very comfortable here, my dear sir," he said with complacent sweetness and self-satisfaction, all unaware of the piteous spectacle his nightcapped well-informed head presented in the estimation of the military man, who was already alienated by a surfeit of botany, and whose hair, blowzing in the chill wind about his high forehead, was not even sheltered by his hat. "I find my tent quite cold.

We should have done better to take up our quarters in this vacant house hard by, as it seems to be abandoned."

He nodded the tassel of his nightcap toward the slumbering town of Ioco, the nearest conical-roofed houses showing dimly against the densely black night. Some residue of light seemed held in the Tennessee River, for now and again came a sidereal glimmer from the reflection of the stars on the invisible surface, and a mysterious vista opened between the towering forests on either bank, where the unseen stream led like some great shadowy roadway into regions of deeper darkness beyond. Ioco Town, long and narrow, stretched along the bank, still and silent. Only the wind was abroad. Of the nearest dwellings all seemed alike, but one quite apart from the others, close at hand in fact, was vacant, according to the adroitly waving tassel,—doubtless impelled by previous knowledge rather than present assurance of the circumstance.

The officer spoke up with only half masked acerbity. He felt responsible, as he was indeed, for the conduct of the expedition to the best advantage, and all details as to transportation, lodgment, the commissariat, passed under his direct supervision. No slight matter was such a march in that region in those days. Now a river had risen out of fording depth, and ferriage was to be improvised, from whatever materials could be had in the dense wilderness, and safely achieved; now an accident occurred to the baggage train, a horse going hopelessly lame, or getting astray; now a shortage supervened in certain provisions for the commissioners that had proved more acceptable than others which thus outlasted them. All the time the discipline of a military camp was to be maintained, the soldiers provided for after their kind, the thousand maladroit incidents of a march of five hundred miles to be severally met and adjusted, without assistance or advice, and reconciled to the comfort and safety of an official party of elderly civilians.

"You will do me the favor to remember, sir, that since the change in the weather I have urged you and the other civilian gentlemen to accept the invitation of the chiefs of Ioco Town and quarter yourselves in their 'stranger-house,' a very commodious lodging and vastly superior to yonder tumble-down hovel."

Everard pointed with the stem of his pipe toward the stove-like "winter-house," a mere shadow crouching low in the night and only revealed because of the far-reaching flare of the freshening camp-fire. The yellow flames sprang cheerily up with a roar and a jet of leaping red sparks. The boughs of the tall hickory trees high over their heads showed fluctuating glimpses of the amber and scarlet hues of the still redundant leafage; a star scintillated through the fringes of a pine; the tents of the little encampment glimmered white at regular intervals in the dusky aisles of the woods; now and again the dull red glow of a fire at some distance, about which was grouped the guard, asserted its fervors, "lights out" being an order held not applicable to it nor to the fire in front of the commissioners' tents; and continually, regularly, the tramp of an unseen sentry, walking his beat, smote on the air with a dull mechanical iteration like the ticking of a clock.

"I should have placed a strong guard about the building," Everard went on, "and as the rest of the escort lies so near Ioco you would have been as secure certainly if not safer than here as you are."

For Everard, not unnaturally, considered the complaint of the discomforts to which the commissioners were subjected as a reflection upon his conduct of the march.

The tassel on the learned nightcap wagged in depreciation. "My dear sir, most true, most true, but"—

"I remember you insisted that you preferred the camp because of possible infection from smallpox in the Indian dwellings," the officer mercilessly went on, with a curl of

the upper lip, already so disdainfully disposed. He had that flouting scorn of the fear of contagion which a man naturally acquires whose life is in continual jeopardy from epidemics, constrained to dwell in hordes, and subject every hour to the chances of the times. "For myself," he protested, "except that I am obliged to keep the escort in camp to avoid brawls between the soldiers and the young Cherokee braves, I should prefer to billet the whole force upon the town, in the good, cosy, dry winter-houses, since this unseasonable chilly change in the weather. There is no more danger from smallpox for you in sleeping in their 'stranger-house' than in the handshaking that went on in the powwowing over the terms of the cession at Choté with the headmen. Shoot me, sir, but you ought to see an epidemic in an army — something to be afraid of! Gad, sir, the men died with cholera in India like sheep — and with scurvy, too, on board ship, both going and coming."

The tassel on the nightcap had lost its pliant urbanity. Be a man ever so scientific, so civilian, so intrusted with peaceful commissionial powers, he cannot admit an inference of fear, even of disease, in taking ordinary precaution.

"All, my good sir, within the scope of civilization and the best deterrent effects of a scientifically applied *materia medica*. The army chirurgeons do good service — excellent, excellent. But here, among the savages, no disinfectant processes obtain, and no intelligent effort to prevent the spread of the dread scourge. Why, sir, in 1738 the Cherokees lost almost half their number by the ravages of the smallpox and their ignorance in dealing with the disease."

"And if they had lost *all* their number I should not hesitate to sleep in one of their winter-houses twenty-four years later. Ha, ha, ha!" The rum was evidently getting in its work. "Hey, Benson," the lieutenant called to his servant in the one illumined tent hard by, "make up my bed in that vacant winter-house, and hark ye, build a

fire in the middle of the floor, Injun-wise! Gad! I'll not be diddled out of the comforts of life for fear of a Cherokee distemper twenty-four years gone!"

The nightcap wished itself where it belonged, on its pillow. To retire with dignity became the most definite motive in the brain that it surmounted, and in this emprise it conceived that some aid might be secured by a few words of casual conversation with the officer's companion, who was therefore civilly addressed.

Now the worshipful Herbert Taviston would have been excited to a frenzy by a false classification of the meanest herb of the earth, and would have repudiated it as an unrighteous pretension and a mischievous effort to subvert the accepted grades and relations of a careful and accurate system. But if aware that such elements and considerations existed in matters military, they were in his estimation of no practical moment, and he turned toward the Highland soldier with as pliant a grace of his tasseled crest as erstwhile it had borne in bending before the commander of the force. And in fact he might well be oblivious of distinctions of rank. The young Highlander had a handsome, kindly, intelligent face and a manner of refinement and dignity, and bating his coarse garb and rustic dialect he might have easily seemed a man of degree. Moreover, he was here hobnobbing familiarly with his officer.

"Do you find your pipe a solace, my dear sir?" Mr. Taviston blandly demanded, for smoking was not then the universal habit that it was sometime earlier and has been since.

"Aye, sir," the Highlander replied politely, a trifle embarrassed by the obvious mistake as to his rank rather than his quality. "But it isna sae cantie a crony as a queigh o' gude browst, neither," he added blithely, with an effort to reëstablish the *entente cordiale*.

The young officer, with sullen, attentive eyes, that held a spark of red fire in their brown depths, glowered at them.

"Ah, so indeed!" suavely commented the elderly night-cap. "But have you observed, sir, that the Indians have another kind of tobacco than that which is commonly smoked,— which is of course the *Nicotiana Tabacum*? Now this other tobacco plant is a small-leaved, green, bitter species which they use exclusively in their religious ceremonies, their incantations, their necromancy, known as"—

"As *Nicotiana diabolica*," suggested the officer.

Now had the nightcap housed but a modicum of tact and permitted a laugh at this fling, all might yet have gone well. But trust a man of scientific hobbies for serious denseness.

"Not at all, sir," he said with asperity. "That name is unknown to the herbalist. The plant is *Nicotiana rustica* with us. With the Cherokees it is *Tsalagayuli*, and the Muskogees call it *It-chau-chee-le-pue-puggee*, 'the tobacco of the ancients,' and the Delawares, *Lenkschatey*, 'original tobacco,'— showing an interest parity of signification; with the coast Indians it is *Uppowoc*; the Tuscaroras call it *Charho*; the Pamlico Indians, *Hoohpau*; and the Woccon Indians, *Vucoone*. Now," turning back to the Highlander with an air of excluding the ill-starred jester on subjects of such grave moment, "there is a so-called tobacco, not even related to the genus *Nicotiana*— it is the *Lobelia inflata*— which furnishes the Indians with a powerful medicinal infusion. Have you noticed in your march hither, and perhaps in your previous campaigns in the Cherokee country, the amazing expertness of the Cherokees in the matter of simples?"

"He is too simple himself," put in the officer, with an airy laugh.

The Highlander's face was flushing painfully. He was carrying a goodly quantity of mixed liquor of the fiercest description, and it had not as yet shaken a nerve; but the consciousness of his false position between his two com-

panions was aiding its potency, and his equilibrium was beginning to tremble.

The botanist, touched in his sensitive pride, calmly ignored Lieutenant Everard at his own camp-fire; and the officer, who had borne much from his idiosyncrasies and had assiduously sought to promote his comfort and security on the weary march hither, gazed at him with a deepening glow of that fiery spark in his eyes.

"The Cherokees' expert knowledge of toxicology in plant forms is amazing," continued the botanist. "They excel all savage nations in their discoveries of vegetable poisons and their application. And then their botanical nomenclature — how happy — how apt! Are you conversant, sir, with their generic plant names?"

"The title of the parent stem, do you mean?" said the unlearned Highlander hesitating, fumbling in his mind as to what Cherokee plant names were considered applicable as to a parent stem.

"He does n't lay much nowadays on the title of parent stems," interpolated Everard flippantly. "His own branch has lost its head, through that head having been so heady as to lose his head."

A keen steely glance, as significant as the drawing of a burnished blade, flashed from the Highlander's eyes and was received full in the gaze of the facetiously fleering officer. The subject of the forfeiture of estates, the loss of titles, the attainer of treason, was not fit for jesting with one who had suffered so fiercely by them, and except in his cups no man would have been more definitely and respectfully aware of this than Everard. And yet the fiery liquor was not altogether to blame. He was as cruelly hampered by the false position as his lowly friend, who nevertheless in every essential that he reverenced was his equal if not his superior. To be ignored, to be talked down, and meekly submit to keep his mouth closed was more than his patience

could admit. But he was practically helpless. He could not seize that egregious nightcap by the tassel and punch that learned head. He could only assert himself by interjecting scoffs and fleering laughter, and because of the fiery cup these were ill advised.

"It is singular how very fitting and descriptive is the Cherokee plant nomenclature!" chirped the botanist. As he sat on a block of wood beside the fire, his face seemed ludicrously small in its strait toggery, in comparison with its enlarged and bewigged aspect by day, and he looked like an elderly infant, if such an anachronism can be pictured. His gaudy gown was drawn close about his spare figure, but he had forgotten to be cold, and his smiling eyes were fixed absently on the face of the young Highlander, as fitting the fingers of his delicate hands daintily together he continued to speak of the accurate niceties of Cherokee plant names.

"*Atali kuli*, 'the mountain climber,'" he translated, his lingering tones almost chanting, so great was his pleasure in the definition; "the mountain ginseng, my good sir." Then, fairly intoning the Latin like a priest, he added, "*Panax quinquefolium*, of the order *Araliaceæ*, also a native of China, sir."

"He is not a native of China, sir. He was made out of a peat bog," put in Everard flippantly.

Naturally the nightcap addressed the civil Highlander.

"Then there is *Ahowwe akata*, 'deer-eye,'—yes, the word *ahowwe* signifying deer,—with us the *Rudbeckia fulgida*. And again," dropping his voice now in depreciation of the suggestion of indelicacy, as if a lowered tone made the allusion more seemly, "there is *Unistiluisti*, meaning 'they stick on,'"—in a whisper, "beggar's lice,"—then at full voice, as if the Latin would mend the matter, "*Myosotis Virginiana*."

The lieutenant looked ostentatiously disgusted. He had indeed never heard of the plant, and the Latin did not

impose upon him, but the mention of the insect from which it took its name was an insult to ears polite. "Oh fie, sir!" he said rebukingly, for he was indeed aweary of it all.

The nightcap turned hastily toward the Highlander, who was heavily harassed between the two, the double discord of their moods jarring upon his nerves and bringing them more under subjection to his previous potations. "Then, my dear sir, there is the Indian shot, the *Canna*, — as you are aware the Celtic word for 'a cane,' — with us the 'headache plant,' and" —

"Come, come, sir, enough of this," cried Everard, scarcely listening, and forced to rise. "We have nothing to do with headaches. It grows late, and your hearer cannot meet your phrase nor match your learning, although as to the question of heads he knows more about them than you can ever teach him. Nothing fixes them in the memory like having them grinning from a city gate."

The Highlander had risen too. He had a pictorial imagination, and there still lingered upon its sensitive retina, so to speak, images of the night's talk, before the botanist had come to the fireside: the aspect of London, the castellated Rhine, the glitter of Paris, and many a suave and southern scene beneath a blue and tropic sky. Suddenly these were all obliterated. That woeful land upon which the cruel hand of Doom had rested so heavily, the sequestered estates, the beggared gentry, the starving peasants, the scattered clans, the hunted fugitives, the proscribed national garb, the hopeless exiles, the prison, the scaffold, the gibbet, — all rose up before him as elements in a stricken gray landscape, in ghastly wintry guise. For one moment he hesitated. Then stepping aside from the fire; he reached out and struck the flippant mocker full in the face.

The officer, taken all unaware, reeled as if he would lose his balance. Then, for he was of a fine, alert physique, he

recovered the perpendicular, and it seemed as if he would spring like a panther upon the Highlander, who had thrown himself into a posture of defense. The next moment Everard's military identity was fully reasserted, and the proud Highlander writhed under the realization that the officer would not return the blow. He would not demean himself by striking so low a thing, — a man of the ranks. His voice rang out crisp and steady as he called the corporal of the guard, placed Callum under arrest, and named the manner and locality of his detention and the details when he should be brought up "at orders" the following morning. Then wholly sobered, Everard turned with dignified courtesy upon the botanist, who was now protesting and squawking like some fluttered fowl instead of a refined and elegant gentleman in the discharge of a public trust.

"I must beg your favor, sir," the lieutenant said, by way of denial of a wild plea for clemency for the culprit. "I understand my duty and I shall do it. And may I beg that you will now retire to your tent, as all this stir may rouse the camp to the prejudice of discipline and good order? I wish you a very good-night, sir!"

And the nightcap with a depressed and lankly pendent tassel and the floriated gown disappeared under the flap of the tent and enlivened the spaces around the fire no more.

XI

POOR Callum Bane ! Sober in good truth and sad as well ! As soon as his guard had quitted his side, he flung himself down on the earth floor of the Indian winter-house, to which he had been conducted, with his cheek pressed to the clay. He wished that the day had come when it might cover him. Then he recoiled with the thought that this might not be far distant. Striking an officer was a most serious military offense. Even apart from its military aspect it was an insult for which only blood could atone. He knew that Lieutenant Everard could never face his world, the officers of his regiment, his mess, if they were aware that as man to man he had tamely submitted to receive a blow in the face. And since he could not challenge one of so low a station as a common soldier, he had let the matter revert to its normal aspect of insubordination, and the military law would take its course.

Yet Callum could have shed the tears that stood hot and smarting in his eyes for this sad finale to their gay young friendship. He had felt that it augured a certain magnanimity in Everard to ignore what he was in station in the knowledge of what he was by descent. Callum would never have admitted, not even in his most secret thoughts, that he found aught lacking in Jock Lesly, whose instincts rendered him a man of intrinsic worth ; but this association on equal terms with Everard, a man of refined manners and gentlemanly phrasings and careful nurture, was to Callum like a return to the companionship of his earlier life, and a relief after the ruder comradeship of the

boisterous common soldier and the dull routine of mechanical duty. He had taken a certain pleasure, too, in the realization that his society was the young officer's only solace in the long and dreary march with its peculiar personal isolation. But it was a pleasure fraught with much pain,—the contemplation of this man in a position which but for an untoward fling of fate might have been his own also. The thought often lent a sharp edge to the close and intimate observation of Everard's opportunities and their development, but Callum was not of a jealous temperament, and did not visit upon the individual, even in secret meditation, the disasters which national circumstances and conditions had wrought. Despite the difference in station and habits, wealth and education, the two had grown fraternally fond of each other, and now there was that between them which could be washed out only with blood, and the officer in the direct discharge of his duty had chosen that it should be with the blood of the soldier.

The sentinel still stood at the doorway, for there was no door, but gradually his glances within, prompted by curiosity, had grown infrequent. There was no guard tent. The men were of the best class, picked for the expedition, and so far not even a trifling misdemeanor had sullied the record of their good conduct. Punctual, alert, efficient, cheerful, invaluable each had seemed in every emergency, and thus the only unoccupied shelter that might conveniently hold a culprit was the clay-constructed winter-house, which stood aloof and vacant on the edge of Ioco Town. The preparations which Everard had ordered, with the intention of occupying it himself, had gone no farther than the kindling of a fire on the clay hearth in the centre of the floor, before it was diverted to the uses of a prison. The smoke, in thin, shifting, scroll-like forms, circled gray and blue about the red clay walls without an exit save such crevices as the wind and rain and neglect had wrought.

As Callum had dropped down on the inner side, the vapors served to screen him somewhat from the observation of the sentinel, who, he now began to notice, had become absolutely oblivious of him. This matter riveted his attention presently. There was evidently some strange stir in the encampment, an odd circumstance, and Callum reflected in sudden affright that he had been bound, needlessly and cruelly he considered. The handcuffs, always carried *pro forma*, were among the baggage, and, it being deemed unmeet to rouse its custodians to overhaul it at that hour, a stout rope had been substituted. A vague clamor of voices came to his ears. He observed that the sentinel at the doorway had become rigid with suppressed excitement. Could it be that an attack by the Indians was threatened? Remembering his bonds, Callum's blood ran cold. The force, while strong enough for protection against unauthorized vagabonds or possible bands of robbers, could not resist successfully an organized assault by the braves of this great tribe. He might well be forgotten in such a crisis—left here bound and helpless, to be captured and tortured and burned. The next moment, listening with every pulse tense, he realized that the voices were those of the soldiers in altercation or extenuation. One shrilly clamoring in Gaelic, as if the strength of his lungs and the pitch of the tone could render his gibberish intelligible to Lieutenant Everard, revealed to Callum's practised ear the cause of the disturbance.

An Indian horse-race had been held in a neighboring town, and albeit this amusement was one which appealed especially to the tastes of the pleasure-loving lieutenant, so grievously debarred and deplorably dull on this uncongenial expedition, he would not attend it himself and issued positive orders that no man of the force should be present. Nay, he went so far as to see to it that none had leave of absence from the camp on any pretext on the day when this

diversion took place. He very definitely appreciated the perils which menaced his little command in case of any antagonism or open quarrel with the tribesmen of the towns. Had his mission been strictly military, to make a stanch defense or a brisk onslaught, it would have been far simpler, in his estimation, whatever dangers or disasters hostility might involve. But the success of his mission depended upon the preservation of a strict peace. Apart from the safe-conduct and guardianship of the commissioners and their attendants, fully one third of the party being non-combatants,— and no man believes so implicitly as does the British regular in the absolute incapacity of the non-professional to do battle in any behalf, or to be of any bellicose value even in his own defense,— the interests of the government were at stake. Nothing could so quickly sow the seeds of dissension, the acute officer argued within himself, as the winning of the Indians' money and valuable furs and other choice gear at the projected horse-race. He did not doubt that charges of fraud would arise, a fracas ensue, the security of the commissioners' camp be placed in jeopardy, and the cession itself imperiled. Hence his self-denial, for he was a good judge of horseflesh himself, and dearly loved a show of speed, and the Cherokees of that day owned some extraordinary animals.

Everard had felt himself extremely ill used by fate, as he was turning away from the camp-fire, after his dismissal of the astonished corporal with the prisoner, and his low bow to salute the disappearance of Mr. Herbert Taviston. His face was smarting with pain from the blow, his heart burned hot within him, his pride upbraided his condescension to this man of low estate, who had so ungratefully requited recognition of his real quality as a born gentleman. While Everard was beginning to revolve troublous doubts as to how the course of action upon which he had resolved in these unprecedented circumstances would be regarded by his mess

and superior officers, a new and unprovoked disaster was presented. One of the corporals in the functions of officer of the day appeared, and with a mechanical salute and a look of abject despair reported that several of the men, three English soldiers and one Highlander, had run the guard that afternoon and had attended the horse-race, in which they had found their account. They had smuggled into camp after dark a quantity of valuable furs, some strings of the fresh-water pearls of the region, and the Highlander had jingling in his sporran some French money, several louis d'ors. So successfully indeed had they managed their enterprise that its discovery was made only through the anxiety of the Cherokees to repossess themselves of these pieces of French gold. By no means adepts in banking principles, they had, nevertheless, with an unassisted natural intelligence evolved the idea of a premium. As soon as the headmen learned the fact of the loss of this money, they secretly offered to redeem the louis d'ors with English currency and pay a guinea extra for the exchange. The "mad young man," Wahuhu by name, who had been grievously deprived by fate of his money, browbeaten by his elders upon discovery of the circumstances, and sent upon this secret errand to retrieve the disaster, was greatly perturbed by the unaccustomed restrictions of the camp. He had himself sought to run the sentry, and being taken in charge by the officer of the guard, naïvely demanded to see and confer with a certain Highland soldier. By adroit cross-questioning the facts had been elicited by the corporal — little by little because of the Indian's reluctance to disclose aught and the linguistic deficiencies of the Highlander.

"Lord, sir, he is a poor creature!" said the corporal, laying the matter before his superior officer. "He cannot talk at all."

"An enlisted man cannot be dumb," said the officer with asperity.

"No, sir, but he can't be understood, sir. He can talk no English, nor even the gibberish they call 'braid Scotch,' nor yet Cherokee. He has nothin' but the Gaelic, sir."

"And yet he can run the guard and bet at a horse-race?"

"Yes, sir; an' win his sporran full o' louis d'ors!"

And with true Scotch thrift the accomplished personage in question would not be parted from them. Thus it was that his voice was presently lifted in the midnight. He spoke on his own behalf. He mistrusted the interpretation of his Scotch comrades, for his ear discerned the difference in their accent from the speech of the English soldiers and the lieutenant, and he cherished the conviction that were the Gaelic but addressed directly and distinctly to the commanding officer, he being a sensible man could not steel his comprehension against it. Wherefore the Highlander yelped and shrilly piped into the night air until the very hem of his kilt quivered with his vocalizations, and the lieutenant stood as if bewitched before him, gazing at the spectacle he presented.

The whole camp was astir. Lights gleamed in sundry tents, all white and translucent in the darkness. Military figures had ventured out and stood in the shadows, some bearing weapons on the pretext of having fancied the tumult a summons to arms. The officer of the guard had attended with the Indian negotiator, who was instantly set at liberty by the order of the lieutenant, but who still lingered with wild eyes and a constant keen turning of the head to and fro to see and to hear; that he was not altogether unsupported might be inferred from vague vistas that the camp lights flung down the aisles of the forest, where shadowy faces and feathered crests showed, flitting like a fancy. And of all, the central figure was Eachin MacEachin, his red hair rough from his pillow and his well-earned dreams of wealth; his dress in disarray, one stocking well-braced and

gartered, the other hanging over his shoe and showing his shapely sturdy leg and his great bare rough red knee; his kilt fluttering in the wind; his freckled face eager and distorted with his vociferations to his discerning commander. And in truth, aided by adroit gesticulations, his words were not so far from intelligible. He spurned the proposition of an exchange. As he opened his sporran of badger skin and took therefrom a glittering gold piece and exhibited it to the lieutenant, then with an ecstatic leer put it between his strong white teeth and bit hard on it to prove it genuine, there was no need for a mortified compatriot, who had volunteered to interpret to the officer, to say, —

“She aye threepit she ha’ gotten ta gowd, sir. She mistrust ta English guinea.” Then with a look of blank distress, “She ’ll aye mainteen she saw muckle French gowd in ta Forty-foive. She ’ll no be so well acquent wi’ ta guinea.”

The object of his aid, desirous of speaking for himself, now and again turned upon his interpreter with a furious Gaelic phrase of repudiation, to which the better soldier, who had run no guard and consequently had won no money, vouchsafed no retort, only commenting indirectly by shaking his head and exclaiming, “Hegh, sir, she’s but a puir creature !”

“I am not so sure of that,” said the lieutenant dryly, “unless I can count what he has got in that sporran !”

Suddenly something in the aspect of the glittering coin which the Highlander still held in his fingers struck Lieutenant Everard’s attention. His face changed sharply. He asked for the coin, and calling for a candle keenly scrutinized the piece by the flickering taper, as the corporal held it, screening with his hand the feeble flame from the wind. In another moment the lieutenant demanded the transference of the remaining five louis d’ors to his custody, sternly insisting, despite the wild plaintive protests of Eachin MacEachin.

All this, the Gaelic being as intelligible to Callum as the English, came to him on the chill night air, and he marveled at Everard's persistence in taking custody of the coins, for although it was the habit of the Highland soldiery to make their officers their bankers, this trust was altogether voluntary, and not by duress, as in the case of poor Eachin MacEachin and his ill-gotten "gowd." As it was the favor of chance, like fairy gold, its possession may have seemed equally precarious; or as it was won in direct disobedience of orders, he may have even entertained doubts of the lieutenant's intentions in the matter of its ultimate return to him, for the Highlanders were as a rule peculiarly averse to the control of any officers save those of their own regiments and more than once mutinied rather than serve under strangers. For whatever reason, so valiantly indeed did Eachin MacEachin resist Lieutenant Everard's orders that force at last became necessary, and his voluble insubordination in the pain of parting with his gold made Callum acquainted with the fact that he might presently expect company in his imprisonment. This recalled his mind summarily to his own plight. He realized the importance of the officer's efforts to avoid a clash with the Indians, and wondered what effect this circumstance would have in the discipline of the military offenders. Suddenly he turned sick and his blood ran cold. The corporal punishment, then in vogue in the British army, was regarded by the better class of soldiers as so great a degradation that a man once brought to the lash was practically ruined, socially and morally. The indignity came all at once into Callum's mind as a possible solution of Everard's difficulty in his case. He knew that he could not be shot without a regularly organized court-martial, which, necessarily delayed, in view of the personnel and conditions of the force, until their return to Charlestown, would also publish far and wide the officer's derogation of his dignity in associating on

equal terms with a private, who had struck him over their drink as an equal might have done. Everard would flinch from this disclosure, for it would impugn his fitness for his position. And yet he could not challenge a private nor submit as man to man to the ignominy of a blow in the face. The summary punishment of a flogging at the head of the line would dispose of the matter with the utmost contempt and amply avenge the indignity. Callum was terrified lest Everard's authority in this independent command of a detachment, so remote from superior military jurisdiction, gave him such latitude, or could be so stretched in view of his dilemma. With the mere thought Callum sprang from the floor with a suddenness that loosened every taut strand of the ropes that bound him. His breath was short; he gasped; the blood almost burst from his veins as his heart plunged and the arteries throbbed. He must be quick; the little makeshift prison would soon be recruited; and of captives, one was a spy on another. He could scarcely see, through the blue swirls of smoke, the sentry at the door, whose attention was still riveted on the excited scene without. Callum had caught at the first wild scheme of release, hardly canvassing its practicability. He did not reckon with the pain or the danger when he thrust his bound hands into the flames to burn off the cords. The thought in his brain, the ignominy that threatened him, seared far tenderer perceptions than appertain to the flesh. The fire caught at the hemp, and he set his teeth hard. The ligaments had at last fallen away when discovery suddenly menaced him.

"Look out for your plaid in there, Callum," said the sentry abruptly. "I smell something burning."

"'T isna wool," rejoined Callum promptly. "My plaid isna even scorching."

And the sentinel, thus satisfied, once more turned his attention without.

Callum looked about him wildly. His first impulse was to throw himself upon the sentinel's back, overturn him, and fly down the dark aisles of the woods — to what? Certain recapture, and an ignominy that overawed his proud spirit more than death.

"Gae cannily — gae cannily," he said to himself, as he crouched uncertainly behind the flare of the fire and the veiling tissues of the smoke.

The house, like all of its kind, had neither window nor chimney. It seemed to him of far ampler proportions than such as were used for a single family, and yet it did not approach in dimensions the great assembly rotunda, which could contain an audience of several hundred persons. It occurred to him that it might have been used as a fort at some date long previous, when perhaps Ioco had served as a barrier town, and this was its outlying defense. He remembered having noted the vestiges of an ancient stockade outside, and with the idea that it might have once held an Indian garrison, his keen eyes searched the interior. The old cane-wrought divan, that once perchance encircled the clay-plastered walls, had long ago vanished, leaving only a mark to suggest it. But above this, on a level with the ground outside, for the floor was fully two feet lower than the surface of the earth, he detected a series of vague circles of white chalk. These white circles indicated where loopholes were concealed beneath the clay of the wall, to be utilized by the forted party in firing on an approaching enemy. He rushed to the nearest in a sudden frenzy. The clay gave way in his blistered baked hands; and suddenly, with an inrush of the sweet woodland air without and a glimpse of the black night beyond, was revealed the loophole, adroitly fashioned by savage skill how many years agone! A limited opening it proved, however, barely sufficient to admit of the flight of an arrow thence, and just above the surface of the ground, but it gave a purchase to the frantic

clutching of his strong hands and for the use of a clasp knife of an ordinary sort that had been stowed in his sporran; for although he had been searched for concealed weapons, it had been but a cursory investigation, as his wrists were bound. The blade broke when the work was nearly completed, but his fingers, although almost nailless and lacerated to bleeding, finished the enlargement of the aperture, and he dragged himself through the narrow horizontal space and stood, breathless, exhausted, in the dark woods without.

Only for one moment did he pause. The clamors at the scene of action warned him that a crisis had supervened. Wild cries of "Ohon! Ohon!" betokened the despair of the erstwhile lucky gambler, the fact that the five louis d'ors were temporarily transferred to the custody of the officer, and that the Highlander and his fellow culprits who had so gallantly run the guard and played the races were being hustled along to the half demolished prison, which they would find empty. The thought lent wings to Callum's feet, for in another moment discovery would ensue and the pursuit come hot upon his track.

Yet his spirits revived as he felt the fresh wind, cool and pure upon his face; his muscles, supple and strong, responded to the demand upon their activities. Like a deer he sped straight through the town and along the sloping bank of the watercourse. At that hour he encountered not a living creature. Only the currents of the Tennessee came to meet him. All was silent save the flow of the water and the flutter of the wind. So definite were these sounds in the night as he went that he began to take heart of grace and hope rebounded anew. The pursuit, he reflected, had probably gone in the opposite direction, since the camp lay on the edge of the town. This gave him time to scheme, to secure some place of concealment, for horsemen, once on his heels, would soon run him down. For this reason he left

the river bank and took his way among the fields. His pace grew slower, for the rugged cultivated ground and now and then great masses of weeds in ill-tended and neglected spaces made the going difficult. Twice he caught his foot in the vines of pompions and came heavily to the earth, where he lay for a time stealthily listening before he dared to rise again. He had great fear of the Indians — the fear of the straggler. They hated the soldiers now more than ever heretofore, and above all the Highlanders, so conspicuous in the recent Cherokee War. A wreaking of many grudges they would find should he fall into their hands while fleeing from the wrath of his officer. A terrible fate this ! a sly, treacherous capture, torture, the stake, a mysterious and unavenged disappearance from the knowledge of all the world ! Military discipline could threaten no such horrors save to a man of his proud temperament. Once or twice he slackened his speed to a walk, swinging onward with a good long stride, but he could not now continuously run ; his strength was spent. Suddenly he came to a full pause, with the weight of doom on his heart. There in the space between two rows of corn the figure of a man stood not three paces distant ! Callum in a panic marveled how he had not noticed this approach. Above, the night was silent, and high over these alien mountains glittered stars that he had known of yore, that still shone over the mountains in far, far Scotland as placidly as before ever Woe came in to sit by her hearth and her sons went forth to exile forever. Nothing stirred save their palpitant scintillations. He could hear naught except the pulsations of his own heart beating like a drum. The figure of the man stood motionless and gazed at him, as motionless, fascinated, helpless, he stood and stared.

“ *Canawlla !* ” (Friendship) Callum at last said softly, although in the dense darkness he could not have stated why he thought it was an Indian.

A moment of suspense passed leaden-weighted.

There was no response. The world was so silent that he heard the almost soundless flight of a bat winging past.

The next instant a strange doubt entered his mind. He put forth his hand gingerly, and laid it on the figure's arm. There was no quick stroke of a tomahawk, as he had half feared. The man's arm, as he stood so stiff and silent, was all unresponsive. In fact, it was but a couple of fagots, and Callum realized that he was in Chilhowee, Old Town, and that this was the image of the Ancient Warrior he had noted in the fields.

"Take that for the leein', fause face o' ye!" he said, striking the gourd in sudden wrath, his cold fear growing hot anger, as he thought of the waste of time that the fright had cost him, and the imminence of the danger in which he stood.

The gourd wavered and dropped suddenly to the earth, and as he mechanically stooped and picked it up, a strange idea struck him. It was a great gourd; he lifted it with its bedraggled war-bonnet to his head, and it slipped easily over and down to his neck. He began in a fever of haste to disrobe the effigy. It had been of gigantic stature, and the hunting-shirt even concealed the kilt of the big Highlander; the leggings went on over his stockings and hid his bare knees; the sleeves came down over his hands. Half supported by the stake which had upheld the scarecrow, he took the stiff pose that he remembered. And why, he asked himself, should he not stand here as safely, thus masked, as lie all day in some Indian hut, if he could gain admission? Doubtless every house on the river bank would be searched by Everard's orders, and most probably he would be delivered up by treachery to this demand, if not murdered to settle old scores. At nightfall he would array the figure anew and slip off, traveling by dark and hiding by day, and returning thus to Charlestown, surrender

to his own captain. He fancied the officers of the Highland regiment could understand the situation, and would relish the allusion to scaffolds and grinning skulls scarcely more than he. If he had been left in his station as a private soldier, he argued, all would have been well. But he had been admitted to familiarity and friendship with the officer as a gentleman, and when over their liquor he had repelled an insult with a blow, as an equal might, he was suddenly relegated to the status and penalties of a private soldier. If the members of the court-martial were minded to account his escape under these circumstances desertion, they could make the most of it: he would rather choose to be shot on this charge than flogged for the blow.

Punctures in the egregious painted physiognomy of the gourd served for sight and breath. The nostrils, the eyes, the mouth, the ears, had all been curiously and faithfully delineated by the Indian artist, according to his lights. Callum tasted the dawn even before he saw that the night was turning vaguely blue. When in this dim medium figures of Indians began to appear, he experienced a sudden elation to perceive that none cast a second glance at the effigy of the Ancient Warrior in the cornfield.

XII

A FINE outlook at life the Ancient Warrior enjoyed. The sun came splendidly up from over the blue and misty domes of the Great Smoky Mountains, and the beautiful Chilhowee Range suddenly sprang from the nullity of darkness into all the chromatic richness of autumnal color. A wind went chanting blithely through its dense woods, as if it were fitting there to be happy where all was so gay. The river, a trifle of fog blurring its silver sheen here and there, reflected the gorgeous tints of the red and gold forests on its banks and caught the light with an added glister. The world was so fresh, so misty sweet, so newly created! The rocks echoed the barbaric notes of the blasts blown on the conch shells, as with the joyful cries of the ~~ritual~~ of their ancient religion the Cherokee braves went down into the water in their symbolic ablutions.

Smoke had long been curling up from the hearths of the houses, and presently the brisk "second man" of the town was marshaling out his cohorts of women and girls to work in the fields. Callum was surprised to see the placid and smiling faces that they wore, for field work in these rich soils is held to be far less drudgery than housework, and even now a feminine farm laborer is hardly to be found to exchange willingly. The Indians always protested that their division of labor, which allotted field work to the woman, favored the weaker vessel, and by no means implied that indifference and scorn of her attributed to them by the white people.

The "second man" in a civilized community would

have been accounted a wag or a buffoon. So very funny he made himself as he sat on the ground near the effigy of the Ancient Warrior that Callum was more than once diverted from his own troubrous thoughts and moved to wish for a few additional phrases of Cherokee, that he might more fully understand the quip and song and tale with which this genius of the field beguiled the labor. The elder women listened with slow and languid pleasure; the children sometimes interrupted with a breathless inquiry. He did not lack his critic to remark, in the course of a twice-told tale, that last year the fox had not thus replied to the admonition of the Ancient Warrior, whereupon, with the privilege of response, the *raconteur* doubled like the animal in question and averred that it was not that same fox! One of the women, a girl of eighteen, perhaps, showed a brilliant, imaginative face as, at the crisis of each story, she turned toward the Ancient Warrior and gazed spellbound upon him with dark, lustrous, liquid eyes, until the "second man" had seen him safely through an adventure of a series for which, had he lived from the days of Noah, the centuries scarcely held space. Then with a long-drawn sigh she would fall to work again, reaching up with lissome ease for the ears of corn which she gathered. Only the children picked the peas and beans and other small crops that the corn had sheltered. For the working force comprised all the laborers of Chilhowee, these being the public fields destined for the common granaries filled for emergencies, and not the individual gardens adjoining each domicile. She was notably expert despite the patent fact that her thoughts were oft so far away; although obviously strong, she was tall and delicately slender, which made picturesque her garb of ordinary doeskin, so fashioned as to leave her arms bare; her buskins were dyed scarlet; and a cascade of red beads, the valueless trinkets of civilized manufacture, bought at a round price from an English

trader, fell from her neck. But she was not in gala attire, by reason of her occupation. Her fingers were long and deft and exquisitely shapely; her feet slender and small. She was endowed with a sort of stately bloom and a consummate grace, that justified the sobriquet by which she was distinguished, the "Cherokee Rose." She obviously cared less for what was done and said here yesterday than for the discourse of the fox and the Ancient Warrior some two or three hundred years before, according to the elastic chronology of the "second man." For when other Indians, evidently of a high grade in the tribe, came up and began to discuss together the commissioners' expedition, she worked on with far greater industry, and only occasionally paused to lift her head from where she stood, half shrouded in the tall maize, to gaze meditatively upon the Ancient Warrior,—the hero of so many fancies, for she was of the type of woman who loves the renown of exploits,—with a patent admiration embarrassing to the fair-haired Callum, even although masked by the gourd. At times he experienced a more formidable embarrassment. He was in terror of a strong inclination to cough. As the day had worn on the smoke and smell of distant burning forests suffused all the currents of the air, for the weather had lately been singularly dry. Sometimes he was almost suffocated by the acrid vapor, collecting in the restricted compass of the gourd mask, and again it was dissipated by the freshening of the wind.

As the headmen lingered and talked, the laborers were rapidly moving on under the directions of the "second man," for the Cherokees never permitted women or boys to hear aught of political machinations or import. Callum began to understand that a runner had brought to Chilhowee the details of the unlucky winning of the French gold by the Highlander, and the ineffectual attempt by the Cherokee headmen to buy it back out of notice with English

guineas. So important did the Chilhowee warriors consider this circumstance that they evidently had half a mind to assemble in council in their town-house to debate the matter, but they were deterred by the remonstrances of the runner, who seemed to give also warning of an approach. Thus Callum was apprised that Everard was in the saddle and on the road hither. It would never do, the messenger argued, for the English officer to find the Chilhowee headmen in solemn consultation,—in effect an official recognition of the importance which they attached to the incident. While admitting the justice of this reasoning, they were nevertheless fain to secure at least a hasty word together as to how they should meet the officer. Therefore it was that the “second man” urged forward the laborers, and the councilors gathered about in the field as if they had been participating, as they often did, in relating the traditions and legends of the tribe, that were thus handed down from one generation to another.

They grouped themselves near the Ancient Warrior, whose pedestal stood in a heap of fodder that usually concealed certain ungainly posturings to which his straw-filled moccasins were prone, but that now served to hide the strong, stanchly planted feet of the hardy infantry-man. Had Callum’s knowledge of the Cherokee tongue been more complete and accurate,—in fact it consisted but of sundry fragments caught up at haphazard in his campaigns in this region the two previous years, and from the Indian guides of the present expedition, and his short stay at Jock Lesly’s trading-house,—he might have comprehended all the subtleties of which this secret discussion was rife. Even as it was, however, he understood that the Indians feared much from the discovery of the French money here.

“The French coins must be taken from the officer—if they were his eyes, if they were his heart; they must be taken from him,” a fierce, straight, stiff warrior, Yachtino,

the chief of Chilhowee, was continually saying as he stood pacifically in the midst of the corn, his feathered crest, his quiver and bow, his garments decorated with fringes seeming not unlike the growth itself, as if he had been thence incarnated.

Another Indian, with a swift, furtive step aside, ever and anon bent to gaze down the trading-path, interjecting from time to time the phrase, "*Usinuli! Usinuli!*" (Quick! Quick!), which agitated the course of the deliberations, usually so slow and decorous, like the sudden striking of a flaw of wind on the surface of placid water.

They all stood in silence and looked stolidly at the ground.

"But how?" said Tlamehu, the Bat, at last. And then another, "How *can* the coins be taken from him?"

Callum, noting the dismay in their countenances, fumbled mentally for the significance of the French money. That this currency should be common among them seemed natural enough, as their intercourse with the French had been great, even before the Cherokee War against the British government. During its progress, indeed, it was believed that in several engagements the Cherokee forces were commanded by French officers.

The next words let in the light.

"And so the coins that had the king's head, pictured in the fine gold, spoke with a deceitful forked tongue, and tells the English that it was made in sixty-two?"

"The date is stamped on the metal — all, all!" impatiently responded the informant.

The words were echoed with an intonation of perplexed despair. Then a despondent silence ensued until Yachtino, the warrior who had first spoken, reiterated: "The coins must be taken from the officer — if they were the breath of his life!"

"But how?" the question came again.

Callum wondered no longer at their agitation. The louis d'ors were of the coinage of 1762, and therefore revealed the fact of renewed machinations with the French, in direct contravention of the terms of the treaty of peace of 1761 between the Cherokees and the British government, which expressly forbade all trade on the part of the Indians with other nations, especially the French, who, being still at war with Great Britain, were to be denied admission to any of the Cherokee towns and intercourse with the tribe, the Cherokees pledging themselves to surrender or kill such intruders. The Indians, indeed, had much to fear from the discovery of this breach of the treaty. They gloomily foreboded therefrom the collapse of the favorable phases of the cession. This secret hope on their part was to effect from the purchase money the speedy supply of the tribe with powder, and thus perpetuate their national existence. The ammunition must needs be secured before any intimation of renewed hostilities, and thus the British government actually would furnish the money for another attack upon its own frontiers. The French would doubtless afford the Cherokees substantial aid, but despite the fairest promises, they were unable to fully supply the savages with ammunition in the last campaign of the furious Cherokee war against the British, failing the Indians at their utmost need. Thus at the critical juncture all their previous fierce and bloody successes were brought to naught. For as a nation the Cherokees were now practically disarmed and at the mercy of any demand made from a basis of powder and lead. It was a new point of view from which to contemplate the proposed cession of land, and Callum felt as if the gourd on his head had spun quite round, since from the English standpoint the cession was designed to bring the Cherokee tribe more definitely under the domination of the British government by strengthening its occupation among them, and thereby monopolizing their trade.

And here, in the British officer's keeping, was the unfortunate French money of the coinage of 1762, that told so straight a tale amidst all these subtle and devious windings of savage statecraft. Callum recognized an imprudence on Everard's part, against which, however, only superhuman wisdom could have guarded, in having overlooked, in the agitation of the moment, the presence of Wahuhu, who had lost the coins at the races,— the sad Screech-owl, who yet perceived with great keenness, and argued with an impeccable ratiocination, and witnessed the transference of the money to official keeping after the lieutenant had scrutinized the date of the coinage. The mere transference of the louis d'ors Callum regarded lightly. Their equivalent in "ta guinea" would undoubtedly be returned, when the force should reach Charlestown, to the man who had at so many risks won the money, and who would easily be reconciled to the English currency in the bliss of the exercise of its purchasing power. Everard intended to reserve the coins themselves to be shown to the royal governor, with the significance of date and freshness of mintage, and these facts would be made a part of the lieutenant's report to his superior officer, offering in support of his account of the matter ocular demonstration of the louis d'ors. Anything that touched upon French machinations among the Cherokees, from whose atrocities the English had suffered so severely in the Cherokee War, and who had been subdued at so great a cost of blood and time and treasure, was of paramount importance in this year of grace 1762, and not to be lightly argued aside.

As Callum watched the fiercely reflective faces of the group, he realized that they contemplated more in the enterprise to serve their object than the mere recovery of the coins. An accident might adroitly account for the event. Some opportune misfortune often befell men charged with disaster to others.

"But how?" the question came again, as if it voiced a common train of thought. In fact they all seemed to think in unison, until one of the group, suddenly looking up, said, —

"But the tongues of the ugly commissioners are strong. They eat much food, they drink much wine, and the British government pays them money for their wisdom. The many black marks that they put on paper will report the French money, the coinage of this year, to the governor. And yet the wings of the eagles overshadow the commissioners, and for the sake of the cession they must not be touched."

"*Usinuli! Usinuli!*" urged the voice of Time, as once more the self-constituted lookout scanned the reaches of the path.

"The commissioners have never shaken hands firmly with the speech of the lieutenant," replied an authoritative voice, "and the lieutenant tells *nothing* to the commissioners."

Canting his eye askew, to look through the orifices of the ear of the image painted on the gourd, Callum saw — to his surprise and indignation, for his heart was still in the undertaking — the Cherokee guide of the commissioners' expedition, whose utilities as a spy for his own people must have been very marked and duplicated his services. He went on with great animation to discuss the mutual relations of the personnel of the expedition.

"The commissioners have never tied fast the old beloved friend-knot with the lieutenant, and the lieutenant despises the commissioners. They are not soldiers, and they look very small in his eyes. And they talk till his ears are tired. When he is scornful he speaks of them as 'lady-like old men,' and when he is angry he calls them 'gentlemanly old ladies'! He trusts them not at all — with nothing!"

“Usinuli! Usinuli!” The sound of doom!

“But though the lieutenant has taken the coins into his own keeping the soldiers have seen them,” said the Indian, who seemed to evolve all the objections for the others to combat, that the scheme might thus be battered, as it were, into solid shape.

“Only the bird that flies high sees far,” retorted Yachtino quickly. “The flock of pigeon soldiers see nothing — they would never notice the date of the coins — the man in command keeps his eyes open and his thoughts awake. Besides, what are rumors among mere soldiers, — the chatter of grasshoppers! The French gold that they have seen — what does French gold signify? It may have been here for years for all they know, — those years when the true emblem of the French was the white dressed doeskin, and the British the long scalping knife. Now those conflicts of the past are wiped out by the treaty, and its strong lying mouth has said that our tears are dried and our wounds closed. But the coinage of 1762 — that is a far different matter! It proves a direct breach of the treaty, and that once more we have taken the great French Father fast by the arm and close to the shoulder. And the path is straight no more! If the French coins of 1762 were hidden in the heart of the officer they must be cut out!”

“*Usinuli! Usinuli!*” The sound was like the beating of a muffled drum in the ears of Callum MacIlvesty, for he realized that the life of the officer was forfeited to the knowledge, which he alone had acquired, of the date of the coins. Should he be permitted to reach Charlestown, whether with or without the fatal pieces, his disclosure of the facts would mean added punishment and renewed restrictions for the Cherokees, already so heavily chastised, the cautious hampering of the Indian trade, and the rupture of the terms of the land cession, through the purchase

money of which they hoped for ultimate freedom. It was too plain: the officer with this knowledge in his possession would be prevented from ever again reaching Charlestown.

But how — that suspicion might impute naught to the agency of the Indians? they asked again of one another. How could he be found accessible and alone? How could he be secured without an attack upon the whole party, which was not to be contemplated, since this would of necessity involve the destruction of the proposed scheme of the cession of land and its financial value to the Cherokee nation — possibly resulting in the extermination of the whole people. Therefore still, "But how?"

"Already they have lost a man," — once more the current of the common thought flowed in words, — "this is a wild country. Many paths lead far — far — with no return. All our little brothers — the panther, the wolf, the wildcat — are many, many — and they none of them are the little brothers of the white man. Should he offend the little brothers he would hardly know how to hide from them! Then there are many wandering Indians from the French settlements, and knowing that the great French Father is still at war with the English king, they would rejoice to slay a man in the British uniform. The British have already lost a man on this expedition — they may well lose another."

Yet how to compass this that the force of the blow might have no recoil! And once more an interval of deep and silent meditation fell upon the group.

The Cherokee spy and guide, whose sensibilities had been evidently ruffled by the manner of the man who employed and paid him, suddenly threw himself into an attitude mimicking Everard's stiff military carriage.

"*Agiyahusa asgaya! Agiyahusa asgaya!*" (I have lost a man!) he cried in Cherokee, but marred with a queer

English accent. A slow smile pervaded the grim circle. “*Agiyahusa asgaya!* the Capteny bleats this through every town. His redcoats search every house and field.”

The Ancient Warrior trembled.

“‘Capteny, *asgaya gigagei?*’” (Captain, a red man? — meaning a British redcoat.) The spy rehearsed this with an affectation of the bated breath of extreme solicitude and a crouching mockery of his own manner of respect. Then with a perfect reproduction of Everard’s petulant arrogance, despite the broken English, “No, no, my good man! I have lost no red soldier, but my plaid soldier, my tartan man, my MacIlvesty! Five guineas reward to the man who brings him to the guard-house before nightfall!”

The officer evidently would pay roundly for the privilege of the lash. His vengeance was indeed afire, and Callum’s cheek burned with a flame to match. They should never take him alive he swore beneath his breath.

“*Usinuli! Usinuli!*” The words swung back and forth like a pendulum chronicling the passing of the moments; and suddenly Callum recognized, blended with the iterative chant, the regular throb of the hoof-beat of horses approaching along the trading-path at a fair pace.

In another moment there issued from the forest a dozen of the English soldiers all mounted, and with Lieutenant Everard riding at their head. Beside him was Mr. Herbert Taviston, bland, smiling, perceiving in the stir and the difficulty that beset the officer only a fine opportunity to browse about a bit in the woods safe from Indians and panthers — the unique advantage of botanizing with a military escort. The lieutenant’s keen eyes, falling upon the group around the Ancient Warrior, discerned at once in them men of station and authority, judging merely from the expression of their countenances, for the occasion being unofficial, they wore no insignia of rank. He at once halted his party, and called out in his crisp, peremptory tones a

request to be allowed to search the town. His guide interpreted, and as the chief, Yachtino, gravely and ceremoniously assented, Everard thanked him curtly and turned to admonish the corporal.

"See to it that the varlets give no offense, Baker," he said. "If the man is taken bring him before me at once."

"Oh, the poor young man, to be sure!" exclaimed the botanist, his eyes gloating the while upon Chilhowee Mountain; every leaf of the myriads it flaunted, red and amber and purple and brown, he could call out of its name with Latin equivalents as flamboyant as the foliage. "Not found yet!"

He had utterly forgotten the provocation that occasioned the arrest and the object of the search, that it held aught more serious than the acquisition which he had made of a certain parasitic plant, the Indian pipe — or let us imitate Mr. Taviston and say *Monotropa uniflora* — delicate, wax-like stems of which he now held tenderly in his spare white fingers, not altogether devoid of similarity to that unique growth.

"I wish to God I could lay my hands on him! I can give my mind to nothing else till I take him," declared the officer fervently, all unaware that as he looked casually at the effigy he was gazing straight into the eyes of the man whom he sought, and who returned a look of fire.

It was a somewhat fluctuating scrutiny that Everard gave the scarecrow, as he sat upon his fine bay horse, for the animal, in spirited impatience of the detention, shifted his position continually, pawing the ground and tossing his head, despite the rein and spur and curb. Thus splendidly mounted, Everard presented a gallant aspect, his showy scarlet coat, white breeches, cocked hat, and polished boots as perfect and precise in this wilderness as if worn on parade. His fine dark eyes and expressive features only

needed in general a cast of gravity and dignity to render them imposing, and this his anger and sense of responsibility had compassed.

The Indians of the group gazed fixedly at him. They had their own reasons, intimately associated with the *louis d'ors* in his pocket, to regard him with a deep morbid curiosity — very shocking to a civilized mind — as a living man who must soon in their interest be dead. And once more the question stirred every brain, “But how?” The Highlander saw his enemy resplendent in all the regalia and rank equally appropriate to his own condition by right of descent, and remembered and repeated in his sore consciousness every word of the foolish, half drunken, brutal fleer of the night before. And the Indian girl, the Cherokee Rose, still at her work hard by, unobserved in the midst of the standing maize, hearing yet unheeding all that had been said, gazed upon the officer with a dazzled reverence, as one might behold the glittering martial vision of the archangel Michael.

Nothing so glorious had ever blazed in her wildest dreams. All her imaginings of the graces and glamours of the Ancient Warrior in the charm of his youth and the heyday of his achievement paled and grew dim and faded out of comparison with this magnificent palpitant reality. Her hands rested petrified upon the ear of corn which she was about to wrest from its stalk. Her eyes, dilated, fascinated, glowed upon him. She scarcely dared to breathe; and for one moment silence encompassed the group. The breeze only vaguely rustled through the crisp, sere blades and stalks; the usual sounds of the town were annulled now, with its “beloved square” vacant, its council-house still, and its women and girls all away at their labors in the further fields. It sent up a mere murmur that came drowsily to the ear on the perfumed suave air of this sunlit autumnal day, for the search, orderly in its conduct, was not

resisted, and made scant stir. The officer's horse broke an interval of almost absolute stillness when it once more lowered its head and fretfully beat the earth with its high-stepping, impatient forefoot. Suddenly the elderly commissioner started from his saddle with an exclamation of bland delight.

"Found, sir, found at last!"

The officer's horse executed an abrupt demivolt as its bewildered rider looked hastily around, expectant of seeing the fugitive. The Ancient Warrior himself crouched appalled in his flimsy disguise.

The amiable Mr. Taviston went on in his address to the lieutenant. "Do you remember last night?" he sweetly queried, while Everard mentally asked himself would he ever forget it. "I had then the pleasure to direct your attention to it — the *Nicotiana rustica*."

The learned man was afoot now and in the path, and it may be doubted if a person of his quality, so dapper, so sprucely clad in his fine brown cloth and silver buckles, ever sustained a glance so surcharged with contempt as the look which the officer bent upon him, albeit Everard had just had a sharp lesson touching undue intolerance, and Mr. Herbert Taviston was of far more worshipful presence in his worldly minded wig and cocked hat than in his intimate, reclusive, betasseled nightcap. His trim legs were carrying him briskly into the field, and a beatific smile of scientific satisfaction was upon his serene, smoothly shaven cheeks and his slightly doubled chin. He paused where a row of plants of the "old religious tobacco" had once flourished and one or two had chanced to escape the garnering knife. Before plucking a leaf he said with punctilious courtesy to the nearest astounded Cherokee, "May I?"

The stolid Indians were obviously thrown into confusion by this unexpected demonstration. It seemed to them that the white people, even those of the same nationality, were

infinitely various, and that there was no reasoning on the basis of the common customs and traits of a gens. Here were two Englishmen as unlike, as far apart in every pulse and every phase of character, as if no national tie bound them together. The inherent courtesy of the savage aided the botanist, however, and the nearest Indian vouchsafed a bewildered mutter of assent. With "A thousand thanks, my dear sir — monstrous obleeged, I'm sure," Mr. Tavistion plucked some leaves of the old religious tobacco and still happily ambling, retraced his way to the side of the horse of the officer, who had hardly yet recovered from the impression that the sudden cry of discovery heralded the finding of the fugitive and the appropriate finale of his dilemma.

"Now, my dear sir," said the botanist, holding up to the lieutenant a few of the leaves, "let me beg that you will do me the favor to taste these. My own tongue is still tingling with the pungency of mint, and the discernment of my palate thereby blunted."

And once more he offered the leaves.

It is possible that the officer had no fear of a probable tobacco worm in the unwashed foliage, still lush and green, and he was also strongly conscious of the inscrutable, attentive faces of the Indians. He had always given orders that his men should observe caution in the presence of the savages to show no divisions, no discourtesies, no quarrels among themselves, thereby bringing each other into contempt or ridicule which might be shared among the Indians, and the opportunity improved by their machinations. Therefore, mindful of the observation of sundry of the soldiers, he practiced his own admonition. Albeit infinitely against his will, he thrust the leaves, possible tobacco bug and all, between his strong white teeth, which he brought crunching down upon them.

"And how does it compare? how does it taste?" de-

manded the botanist, smiling his soft, white shaven benevolence.

"Nasty, sir, very extremely nasty," said the disgusted lieutenant. "And as I am not a browsing animal generally, sir, I have no other experience of green forage with which to compare it."

As, despite his intention, some of the juice went down his throat, he was suddenly reminded of the botanist's laudation of the skill and extraordinary knowledge of the Cherokees in the matter of vegetable poisons, and felt that he was relying too implicitly upon the scientific learning and plant identification of this gentleman, of the justice of whose pretensions he had no means of judging. For aught he knew the stuff might be poison. It was certainly unlike any tobacco that he had ever seen. He at once thrust the leaves from his mouth, and then several times spat copiously upon the ground, the action of the saliva being stimulated by the tobacco.

At that moment the corporal came up with the report that the search had resulted fruitlessly. Everard took leave of the Indians merely with a ceremonious bow, and the party rode hastily off, straight down the river and once more toward Choté.

For one instant the Cherokees stood silent and motionless, watching the flying horsemen, the sun glittering on their red coats and burnished arms. Then to Callum's amazement an elderly Indian, with a sudden sharp cry such as an animal might utter in seizing upon its prey, sprang forward, dropped upon his knees in the path, and caught up the dampened tobacco leaves and the clod of clay upon which the saliva had fallen. Half articulate exclamations of guttural triumph rang upon the air from the group, and Callum, glancing from one fiercely joyous illuminated face to another, felt as if his senses were in the thrall of some fantastically horrible nightmare. For the possession of

the man's saliva gave them, according to their savage creed, power over the man's life. It would end when the spell should be worked.

Perhaps because of the superstitions of his native land, in which his childhood had been deeply imbued and which his nerves still accredited, while his mind resolutely repudiated them, Callum watched with a sort of sickened fright the preparations for the necromancy. Far away the laborers in the fields were working now, even the girl who had lingered so long, and the sere stalks of the tall corn concealed the secret ceremony of the schemers from the other denizens of the town. Only the Ancient Warrior, who had seen so much of yore, was to behold the calling down of the curse.

Suddenly — Callum could not believe his eyes — there issued from among the tall cornstalks the figure of a man, a familiar figure, a face that he knew well, or was he bereft of his senses ? For here was Tam Wilson, arrayed in buck-skin, fantastically beaded and fringed after the Indian fashion, his head bare and polled like a Cherokee's and decorated with feathers. Yachtino, stepping hastily toward him, greeted him in the Cherokee language, and pointed out the preparations for the necromancy. Tam Wilson, also speaking in Cherokee, questioned minutely, and stood for a moment gazing after the cheerataghe. Then as he turned away — miracle of miracles ! — he spoke to himself in French.

“ *Tant pis pour lui !* ” he commented upon the working of the spell. “ *À bon chat, bon rat !* ”

He was gone in another moment among the corn, and Callum understood at last the mystery of his continued presence here, — that this was the arch-plotter whose machinations threatened the peace of the Cherokee country.

Callum was dizzy with the significance of the discovery, the thoughts of import, that crowded upon him. Only as in a dream he beheld the group of the scheming headmen

of Chilhowee, eager, breathless, expectant, standing close at hand while one of the cheerataghe, a man with the frenzy of a fanatic in his eyes and the fury of a savage, came slowly down the space between two rows of the corn. He was clad in the usual buckskin garb, but draped above it was a large dressed hide decorated with painted symbols and strange hieroglyphics. Upon his head he wore the horns and head of a buffalo, and as Callum listened to the incantation, delivered in a weird, chanting undertone, with frequent interpolations of a sonorous, exclamatory "Ha!" and anon pauses of impressive silence, he felt his blood go cold.

"*Usuhiyi nunahi wite tsatanu usi gunesa gunage asahalagi. Tsutu neliga.*" (Toward the black grave of the upland in the Darkening Land your paths shall tend. So shall it be for you.)

The increasing excitement of the moment showed in the attitude of the other Indians, motionless, yet with an electrical energy of pose, as if on the point of springing forward. They looked on, fiery eyed but silent, from among the cornstalks, save that now and again an inadvertent "Ku!" breathed out from surcharged lungs, and once Yachtino muttered "*Nigagi!*" (This ends it!)

As the magician paced along he carried in his hand, like a sceptre, a hollow reed of the poisonous wild parsnip, filled with a paste compounded of earthworms and the spittle-moistened clay, to be buried at the foot of a lightning-scarred tree in the forest.

"*Tsudantagi uskalutsiga. Sakani aduniga. Usuhita atanisseti, ayalatsisesti tsudantagi, tsunanugaisti nigesuna. Sge!*"⁹ (Now your soul has faded away. It has become blue. When darkness comes your spirit shall grow less and dwindle away, never to reappear. Listen!)

The wizard had reached the gloomy shades of the dense woods, and the terrible words of the spell came floating back on the air, dwindling with the distance like the diminishing

thread of the life which it affected to attenuate and reduce and finally cut short.

Listen! not even an echo now of that weird voice! Only the river's song; the sound of the wind blaring about Chilhowee Mountain; the vague, far-off tones of the "second man" still at his quips and quirks in the field; and suddenly the shrill, callow laughter of happy children.

But for the icy drops starting on his brow Callum might have thought he had been dreaming. Yet he stood in the burning sun, and so shivered that had now the Cherokee Rose gazed upon the hero of her fancies, she must have deemed the Ancient Warrior stricken with the palsy. He was alone, however, none near to mark his lapse from the verisimilitude of deportment. A bee came buzzing by, and crawled up and down the quaint lines of the gourd vizard for a time, making the Highlander tremble for a possible entrance through ear or eye spaces, but at last it took droningly to wing. A lizard basked in the sun, as doubtless it had done for many a day, on a stone at the feet of the scarecrow. A blue jay, the sauciest of feathered rufflers, even alighted on the crown of the dingy old bedraggled war-bonnet, and there preened his brilliant blue and white plumage, and clanged his wild woodsy cry, and so off again to the splendors of Chilhowee Mountain, gold and red above the silver river and against the azure sky. And these wights were all the passers-by, while Callum shivered and trembled from head to foot and scarce could stand. He had no need of knowledge of the Indian character to be aware that the savages would not fail to assist the workings of the charm by non-magical powers. Everard, undoubtedly, by some crafty device would be lured to his destruction.

The tempter, ever present, did not fail to suggest thereby the solution of Callum's own problem: with Everard gone, his accuser had vanished. Even the corporal supposed his incarceration was but the result of some slight insub-

ordination, or perhaps Everard's own hasty and arbitrary whim while in liquor. As to the bewildered Mr. Taviston, his incoherent impressions were hardly to be considered, so confused was he by the sudden altercation. Thus Callum might escape the shame of the lash that he dreaded more than death itself, and also save his own life. He put the thought from him. He would return now willingly, willingly; he would in this cause face aught that might menace him — and not for sheer conscience' sake, for at heart he loved the fop like a brother.

Yet should he issue forth and return to camp, he well knew that Everard would laugh the threat to scorn, and fancy the whole adventure feigned to win his gratitude and save the culprit from the lash. Callum's invention would respond to no goading. How could he forecast and thwart the strange, savage lure which the Indians would devise? That it would be apt, efficient, and bold withal, on the strength of their faith in their own necromancy, thus crediting the spell with the result of their own efforts, he was sure. And yet strive as he might, he could not rouse his jaded faculties to divine, to baffle, to counterplot.

Some time had passed thus, when a sudden movement close at hand caused him unthinkingly to turn his head. Fortunately the gourd wizard was so ample as to permit the motion without stirring the mask. There again was the Indian girl who had gazed so lovingly upon the effigy as almost to disconcert the fair-haired Callum that it masked, — not gazing upon him now, however. The same girl it was, he was sure, although she passed by her ancient hero with so fickle an unconcern. But for bewitchments! the Cherokee Rose was metamorphosed by a simple splendor into the rarest bloom. White beads were twined in her long black hair, where they glistered like pearls. A strand of the large, beautiful, genuine pearls, still found in the rivers of the region, only slightly discolored by the heated copper

spindle which the Indians used to pierce them, encircled her round, roseate-tinted throat. Her dress of fawnskin dappled with white had a belt of many rows of white beads and a low collar or cape of swans' feathers. Above her high white buskins two small skins of otter fur, worn like garters, were each trimmed with straight stiff swan's quills that stood out horizontally, and gave the suggestion of wings to her feet, if one were open to poetical imagery, or a bantam-like decoration, if prosaically inclined. Her face was turned toward the road with a wistful, fascinated expression in her soft, liquid eyes that would have been charming to view if any but the supplanted Ancient Warrior had beheld her. Now and again, with an incomparably graceful, lissome gesture, she lifted one bare arm and silently beckoned the unseen.

The expectation of an approach along the path reminded Callum of the sinister consultation of the headmen here to-day, and suddenly the Ancient Warrior spoke.

“*Higeya tsusdiga! Higeya tsusdiga!*” (Oh little woman! Oh little woman!)

Instantly she was palsied, stricken dumb. Faithfully as she had believed in the Ancient Warrior, she had never thought to hear him speak. Human credence has ever its reservations. She gazed wide-eyed at the image, her lips parted, her hand on her plunging heart.

Sunset was on the face of the effigy; the soft red light freshened the effect of his tattered old war-bonnet and gilded the stalks of the high Indian corn amidst which he stood. Whether or not Callum was conscious of his enhanced comeliness, the awe and respect in her face and the obvious simplicity of her mental endowment nerved the young dare-devil to venture further speech. And indeed something must needs be risked in view of the unwelcome knowledge that had come to him and the restrictions that hampered its use. He mustered his best Cherokee.

"Who are you waiting for, little woman?"

"No Chickasaw, oh good grandfather," she cried hastily; for one of the best stories of the "second man" chronicled the hatred which the Ancient Warrior had cherished against that tribe, and his valor, which had nearly exterminated them from the face of the earth. His sentiments were pointed by the fate of a Cherokee maiden who married a Chickasaw and went to his tribe to dwell, and daily the Ancient Warrior dispatched the magic messenger bird that lived among the Tuckaleechee towns in the Cherokee country, on the banks of the Canot River, to remind her of her home; and as the memories she could not shake off clung about her, she finally became imprisoned in their convolutions; and to this day she can be seen in the Chickasaw country, where they think she is nothing but what she seems, — a tangle of grapevines!

The Ancient Warrior said nothing in reply. He was making a strenuous mental endeavor to adjust another Cherokee sentence. His silence terrified her. His anger was full of spells, as the "second man" well knew; an *ageya* lost her garters, for instance, and none would ever again stay on, and thereafter she presented an appearance painfully undecorated. The Cherokee Rose abruptly cut short the silent linguistic toil of the Ancient Warrior by hurriedly explaining of her own accord.

"A strange British warrior, oh good grandfather, — a splendid red captain, most beautiful and brave, who will come up the path and pass the mountain to-night on the way to Talassee Town. The same, oh good grandfather, that made the road bright and shining to-day. And even if he should come after the sun has gone down, one could never miss the light of the day, but could see him yet ride his horse along the river bank. For he is like the sun in splendid red, and his hair shines with a white glister, and the look in his eyes warms the heart."

The Ancient Warrior marked how the mental image she had summoned up diverted her attention from him, for the fascination of the supernatural had waned as she spoke, and she turned half away from the effigy, which she had once so reverenced, to gaze along the curving westward path for the vision of her anticipation. The Ancient Warrior, all sullen and serious, gazed calculatingly and doubtfully at her.

The ranges were purpling along the perspectives of the background; the forests of Chilhowee Mountain flamed gorgeously gold and red in the middle distance; the sky above was all radiant with a uniform amber tint. As she stood amidst the sun-suffused Indian corn, the sere hues of which so harmonized with the deeper shade of her garb of white-dappled fawnskin, and the dense white of the swan's feathers about her shoulders, she looked as might some primeval ideal of the mystic harvest moon. Half mechanically she still beckoned, as if thus she might bring the sun of her fancy to meet her upon the horizon line.

“*Ha, Capteny Gigagei!*” she cried. “*Usinuliyu! Usinuliyu!*” (Oh great red captain! Haste! Haste!)

The Ancient Warrior suddenly spoke sternly. “*Higeya, hatu ganiga!*” (You, woman, come and listen to me!)

Once more with that unquestioning subjection to the superstitions of the cult in which she had been reared,—oh wily second man!—she turned submissively toward the Ancient Warrior, albeit her docile obedience might cost her eyes the first resplendent glimpse of the Capteny Gigagei, riding his gallant war-horse straight out of the red west and the illumined amethystine mountains, whither that humbler scarlet splendor, the god of day, was now slowly disappearing. She lifted her appealing child-like eyes to the gourd wizard of the young Highlander, and well it was that he wore this impassive mask, for his own face was pallid with exhaustion from a sleepless night and the exertion of standing all day without food, drawn with the stress

of much anxiety, and lined with the many perplexities of his thoughts. The gourd face, however, acquiring naught by propinquity, looked as it always did, as its Indian draughtsman intended that it should,—arrogant, surly, threatening, and very majestic.

“Oh good grandfather !” she faltered.

“*Higeya tsusdiga* (Oh little woman), how do you know he comes ?”

“Oh, he comes, he comes without doubt!—the headmen said late, but I hoped early, so that I might see him as he rides his splendid horse along the river bank. The headmen know he comes; they are ready for him; he will be received at the house of the chief of Talassee. He comes because a wicked man — one of his own soldiers — has fled, has deserted the great red Capteny, and is in hiding at Talassee Town, and the headmen have sent him the message that he may come and take him with his own hand, lest the plaid soldiers, the comrades of the runagate, wreak vengeance on Talassee, should the town deliver him up to penance. The headmen have only *secretly* sent messages where the fugitive can be found. Oh good grandfather, the Capteny comes, he comes ! To-night he will abide at the house of the chief of Talassee, where a great feast is made in his honor, and the braves will dance the eagle-tail dance, and then the young girls will dance in three circles with the braves, and I, too, I am to dance. And there will be good store of wine at the feast (lowering her voice mysteriously) — *French* wine, oh good grandfather, but surely the Capteny Gigagei cannot taste its *French-ness* ! And to-morrow the army of the commissioners will start back to the Carolina country and overtake the great red Capteny at Talassee, and he will march at the head like the king of his tribe.”

The heart of the Ancient Warrior turned cold and seemed to cease to beat. The ingenious scheme was thus unwit-

tingly outlined before him. He knew that the thought of personal danger would never occur to Everard as the result of the French coins in his keeping and his knowledge of their significance, since any personal violence offered to a man of his note would result in instant discovery and speedy vengeance. From the beginning of the negotiations there had been more or less interchange of friendly courtesies and mutual hospitalities between the Cherokee headmen, the commissioners, and the commander of the military force. Although Everard kept the rank and file close in camp, in view of the disastrous possibility of clashing between the boisterous young soldiers and the "mad young men" of the tribe, he himself went about the country freely enough. He would not hesitate, Callum was sure, to leave his orders with the first sergeant for the march of the troops on the following day, and accompanied by a single orderly, or perhaps by only the Cherokee guide, proceed to the tryst of the headmen, where he would expect to capture the runaway Highlander, and rejoin the escort when its vanguard should come in sight from beyond Chilhowee Mountain.

No prophet need one be to foretell how the lines would straggle past ; how the sergeant in command would hourly expect his superior for a while ; then being without orders to halt would proceed for a day or so, Everard's lingering stay being of course within his own discretion. And at last anxiety would develop, increase to troubrous forecast, to panic fear ; a halt would be called, a detachment sent back, to find — nothing ! A mysterious disappearance, — some crafty, subtle, convincing story to account for it innocuously. Callum did not dream what this could be ; only afterward its details were made clear to him by another, more discerning.

What fate ? he speculated — the river ? No. The first sergeant, quailing under his awful responsibility, would drag it for miles and miles in search of the body. The stake ? —

a handful of ashes could tell no tale. Surely the magic compound of earthworms and spittle-moistened clay, mysteriously potent, buried at the foot of the lightning-scarred tree, might spare room for the sepulture of so trifling a residuum of all that gay spirit exhaled in smoke. Perhaps a more stealthy method still — Everard might be drugged into quick insensibility by some mysterious poison mixed with the French wine, and buried forever out of sight somewhere in the infinities of the illimitable wilderness.

The Ancient Warrior trembled till the pole which aided to support him shook in the ground.

One by one the schemes of possible rescue of his erstwhile friend and his present enemy, and above all and before all his commanding officer, fell to shreds as he sought to hold up the fabric in contemplation of its feasibility. He said again that he would surrender himself now most willingly ; he would resign himself to any punishment rather than this disaster, this treachery, this cowardly massacre, should ensue. But how would surrender now avail ? He could not regain the camp without the danger of passing Everard, coming hither on another path. He resolved that as soon as the first beat of the horse's hoofs should herald an approach he would rush out from his hiding-place, seize the officer's bridle, and compel him to listen.

Alack, the sun was already down ; the dun shadows were on the land ; far away the dim stretch of the sere corn-fields held all the fading light between the slate-hued clouds, coming up from the south over the Great Smoky Mountains, and the deep purple ranges that loomed close about and limited the horizon. A dark night was at hand, without a star. How should he distinguish the hoof-beat of one horse from another ? Everard might well pass without a word.

As thus the difficulties of the situation baffled his flagging invention, the Ancient Warrior unwittingly lifted his hands and wrung them together in the hard stress of his

contending emotions. His grotesque vizard was upturned appealingly to the darkening sky, and he uttered a deep sigh.

The Cherokee girl, with a sudden look of appalled discernment on her face, stepped back abruptly in affright, then stood in the shadows of the denser stalks of corn, all writhen and twisted about her, and gazed through the deepening dusk at the effigy.

In this crisis, this emotional revulsion of loyalty to his officer and affection to his friend, Callum would not have grudged the sacrifice had he rushed out blindly in the night and by mischance revealed himself to Indian horsemen and certain capture, if it would not also entail the success of their treachery in decoying Everard to his death.

“Eh, gude God — he maunna come — he maunna ride at a’ the nicht,” he said aloud in a strained, poignant voice, all oblivious of the Indian girl, who still stood hidden in the dusk and the tall stalks of the maize, and silently, breathlessly, stared.

Much accomplished as she had known the Ancient Warrior to be, not even his vaunting biographer, the “second man,” had ever claimed that he spoke English.

The poor Ancient Warrior! His head drooped quite low, despite the arrogance of the expression of his vizard. There was something in his eyes that scalded them, for the Highlander was still very young, and had been gently reared in a household of sisters; and his great proficiency in the use of the broadsword, which made him so valued a soldier, was superimposed upon simple, tender-hearted, ingle-side habitudes. In fact he must needs slip a hand up under his roomy vizard to wipe off the very genuine tears which were burning his cheek — not that he acknowledged these tears, no, not even to himself.

“Hegh, sirs,” he exclaimed, “this singeing reek is fair blindin’ me!”

As he spoke a new thought struck him. He lifted his head once more and snuffed the odor of the distant burning woods.

It was dark now, quite dark. The color of the cloud and the mountain had blended indissolubly in densest invisibility. Not a star was alight in the sky. Only to one standing in the cornfield, hardly a yard away, and with a discernment keenly whetted by previous sight and accurate knowledge of the surrounding objects, could aught have been perceptible as Callum straightened himself, and turning, looked carefully around him.

"The bit lassock ha' flitted awa'," he said, quite satisfied.

But close at hand, still screened by the darkness and the tangled growth, she watched the Ancient Warrior fling his vizard into the peas, strip off his buckskin shirt and leggings, and emerge in the kilt and plaid of one of the Highlanders of the escort. With the quick, keen wits of her race she made no doubt that here was the wicked renegade who had incurred the displeasure of the splendid red sun-god of a captain, and who was falsely reputed to be lurking in hiding at Talassee.

Callum, without a moment's hesitation, struck off in a long, rapid stride through the corn. Silently, stealthily, she followed him — not like a shadow, for not even a shadow could follow thus through the densities of that dark night.

XIII

AT camp an unusual activity had characterized the closing hours of the afternoon. It was the eve of the day fixed for the departure of the commissioners and their escort. The official business had been concluded. The survey of the land to be ceded was completed. The last feigning objections on the part of the Cherokee headmen and the final devious doubtings of the commissioners had been merged in mutual concession and compliant acquiescence. The gifts brought to propitiate the Indians had been presented and graciously accepted, and the official farewell taken with much smoking of the friend-pipe and saltatory agilities of the eagle-tail dance.

That no unforeseen mishance might hamper the early start, Everard, with military prevision, had caused every preparation to be so completed as to leave as little as possible to be done on the morrow. The pack-horses had been ranged in due order and tethered, and had but to be loaded, the fardels of the pack saddles being already made up and strapped on ; the travel rations for several days had been issued to the men ; the personal luggage of the commissioners was also ready, owing to the repeated insistence of Everard ; the final orders had been given the first sergeant, left in command in his stead till he should join the line of march at Talassee. He himself in his tent, with hardly a hand's turn left to be done, was on the point of setting out to ride to Talassee Town with his Cherokee guide to capture Callum MacIlvesty.

The Indians had made a mystery of their information.

They had first sworn Everard to secrecy and then held back as if to disappoint him finally. They affected fear of the Highland contingent. Oh, the plaid-men were very terrible warriors ! Were the horrors of Montgomerie's campaign and the slaughter and the fire-raising of Grant ever to be forgotten ? And since the Cherokees did all in love for the great red Capteny, it would not be wise or kind of him to allow the wrath of the plaid-men, for the surrender of their brother, to fall on Talassee Town, which the Highlanders might sack or burn — well remembered were their sackings and burnings ! — as they marched through on the morrow upon the peaceful trading-path, which was now so white and bright from end to end. If the great red Capteny did not wish this path to be stained with the blood of the Indians, and perhaps of the plaid-men also, it would be well if he came to Talassee Town himself. There he might meet his tartan renegade as if by chance, and take him with his own hand.

Everard was troubled beyond expression by MacIlvesty's continued absence ; first, because of a genuine and humane fear that he would suffer a horrible death at the hands of the treacherous Indians, especially as the imminent departure of the troops could not be postponed on the desperate hope of a still further search for the willful runagate, and Callum would necessarily be left alone and at their mercy in the savage wilds. Nevertheless, the anger of the officer burned with great rancor. He believed that he would not have suffered the least pity had a court-martial gone the extreme length of sentencing MacIlvesty to be shot. That he should be brought to the degradation of the lash seemed to the lieutenant most meet and fitting whenever he felt the smart of that scarlet diagonal line, beginning to turn slightly blue, across his cheek. Punishment MacIlvesty had richly deserved, but the accident of torture by savages could not be accounted retribution for the crime

of striking his officer. Nor could Everard, as his officer, feel justified in abandoning the Highlander to such a fate except at the last extremity, although he would not have regretted the righteous exaction of every pang of the penalty to which a court-martial might sentence the culprit. Therefore, impatient of the mysterious locutions and doubts, and alternate promises and withdrawals, by which the Cherokees sought to magnify the importance of their disclosure, Everard took no heed of personal prudence and was ready to put foot in the stirrup when suddenly there appeared at the flap of his tent one of the commissioners, fresh from an outing, clad in a long and dapper riding "Joseph," his head cowed with a comfortable "trot cosy," a suave smile upon his lips, and a bland "May I?" upon his tongue.

Everard in another moment had cause to curse his folly that he did not refuse the commissioner entrance; but he imputed much importance to a request which he anticipated, and therefore seated himself upon a stump of a tree, which had been sawed off smoothly to serve as a table, and resigned the single camp stool to the guest.

"The *Magnolia auriculata*," Mr. Taviston said with a sigh of pleasure, "the most pompous beauty of the forest."

He held forth a leaf of a tree, which a greater botanist has since rapturously described as "superbly crowned or crested with the fragrant flower representing a white plume, succeeded by a very large crimson cone or strobile."

The officer gazed at it with uninterested and unrecognizing eyes. The only magnolia which he could identify was the growth which we call *grandiflora*, and which he had seen farther south.

"I have spent the day among the magnolias," said the botanist, smiling consciously and with a sort of gloating reminiscence, as if Daphne herself had entertained him in the boskiest bowers. "And here," presenting a gigantic leaf, "is the *Magnolia tripetala* — and this, the *Magnolia*

pyramidata — foliis ovatis, oblongis, acuminatis, basi auriculatis, strobilo oblongo ovato."

"Good God, sir!" the petulant officer interposed, hastily rising in desperation. "I cry you mercy! My duties" — he hesitated, then stopped short.

For the trip must needs seem of his own choosing, — to attend a feast made in his honor by the Cherokees because of his seeming interest in Indian life and ceremonial. The thought of the postponement of his ride and its important object greatly perturbed him. He had hoped to avoid delay by admitting his tormentor. Twice, nay thrice, after the botanist's baggage had been consigned to the locality where the pack-train was to be loaded had the quartermaster sergeant, who officiated as chief of transportation, reported to the commanding officer various vexatious requests of the worshipful Herbert Taviston to be allowed another deposit therein of trophies of bark and leaves, and, for aught I know, caterpillars and beetles, — natural specimens, which he did not hesitate in the interests of science to insert amongst his immaculate and high-minded toggery. The lieutenant, anticipating the renewal of such requests, had intended to peremptorily refuse another overhauling of the baggage, because of the confusion entailed upon the somnolent and orderly camp, and possible delay on the morrow. Hence he was thrown out of his calculations, and flushed and bit his lip with vexation. Nevertheless he could not rid himself perfunctorily of the presence of his unwelcome visitor by the plea of the pressure of official duties. The preparations for the morrow's march were obviously complete, the camp asleep; moreover, his spurs jingled at his heels and his horse pawed at the door of the tent. The pretext of his own diversion was necessary to protect or satisfy his Cherokee informants and to furnish a reason for his quitting the camp. He looked with sudden hopefulness at Mr. Taviston, who also rose, but the motion was merely mechanical,

without a parting instinct. The smile yet resting upon the botanist's face was inattentive, undiscerning. The officer was a natural specimen the study of which did not allure him in the least. He scarcely listened to the lieutenant's words, so absorbed was he in the subject.

"The soil of this region is rich, sir, incredibly rich for mountain slopes. This redundant example of the *Magnolia acuminata*, sir, hangs positively over a precipice, craggy steeps, imposing and horrid. If you would but give yourself the trouble to step with me to the door, I could point out to you, even in the darkness, the height of the location where I found it, — an altitude of fully two thousand feet. The precipice is distinctly imposed upon the sky against the constellation Perseus, which must be well risen now if the clouds — ah — ah — ah ! "

The officer, moving alertly toward the door, following his guest in the hope of ultimate release outside, had held up the flap that the botanist might emerge, and frowned heavily as he heard Mr. Taviston's voice rising into a quavering exclamation of surprise.

"What cracker next ! " Everard cried impatiently.

In a moment the words died upon his lips, and he stood staring out into the night, half dazed with his sudden revulsion of feeling and the extraordinary sight that met his eyes.

For the woods of Chilhowee Mountain were not invisible in the purple night and under the black cloud, but splendidly agleam in the shadows. All red and gold they showed, and wreathed about with scroll-like involutions of blue smoke. Volleying here and there at wide intervals were jets of flame, vivid white, tinged with red at the verges. Now and then strange meteors flew through the dense forests in airy arabesques, lace-like in their tenuity, where the blazes caught at sparse series of dead leaves still hanging sere and dry in wind-denuded areas. The ranges

in the distance were suddenly evoked from the darkness and stood as in a trance, motionless. Further still, in the ultimate scope of vision, vague, illusory suggestions of mountain forms continually trembled and flickered as the flames rose and fell. The fire was fierce and furious along the lower reaches of Chilhowee where the trading-path crossed, for much light wood of undergrowth was among the great trees, and the elastic blazes that could only leap hound-like about the huge boles, as if seeking to seize their prey in the branches, easily enveloped the slender saplings, which now and again sent forth cracklings as of a sudden volley of musketry. All the black cloud above looked down in sullen dismay at the aghast earth, thus roused out of the abyss of darkness and night, with a strange, unnatural aspect upon the familiar contours of the landscape.

The Cherokee towns along the river were all astir. Here and there upon the banks flitted scantily clad Indian figures, gazing at the mountain and speculating upon the mystery of the ignition of the woods; for the Chilhowee Mountain is many miles in length, and it would seem that some region nearer to the distant burning forests, unseen and far to the north, must have been first fired. Although because of the recent drought the woods were dry, they would never have burned without extraneous kindling.

Everard had turned instinctively to his horse, with the intention of riding forth to investigate. His Cherokee guide checked him.

“No can ride to Talassee — no can cross mountain — fire — fire — all fire !”

The amazement, the dismay, and something more — the deep, cogitating speculation on the man’s face — fixed Everard’s attention. The light of the burning scene was full upon it, glimmering upon the feathers on the top of the Indian’s head as he bent forward to gaze, but the shadow annulled the rest of his body, and his aspect in the weird

effects of the flicker was as if he had been decapitated. When Everard next turned to speak to him the man had disappeared. Inquiry revealed the fact that he had quitted the camp. For the first time Everard experienced a sudden doubt of him. What significance did he perceive in the fire? And why should he look so downcast, so defeated, so despairing — as at the end?

The camp had been roused by the crackle and roar of the flames and the wide, blaring illumination, as if the world were afire. The officer doubled the camp guard by way of precaution against any disturbance, lest the kindling of this conflagration be attributed to the agency of the soldiers as a bit of bravado on their part, and rouse the wrath of the Indians to reprisal. Then he went back into his tent and sat down on the camp stool beside the table, rudely fashioned of the stump of a great tree, and tried to think out some new solution of the problem of the capture of MacIlvesty. The candle was still burning with a timid, white, pearly lustre, all pallid and dim against the great yellow flare outside, which showed through the translucent canvas walls. The gigantic leaves of the *Magnolia tripetala* still lay on the improvised table, and he had his elbows among them and his head in his hands, when suddenly he was aware of the corporal of the guard standing and saluting in the doorway.

“Ready with some new foolery?” Everard demanded tartly.

“Yes, sir,” the corporal replied with anxious deprecation. “Here’s a messenger, sir. I can’t make out who she comes from. But she seemed possessed to get a word with you, sir. She was so excited and hasty that, though I had no orders, I was afraid of letting important news slip if I sent her away.”

“What’s her name?” demanded Everard, in frowning haste. The moments at this crisis were important.

"I don't know the Injun lingo, sir, but they call her the 'Cherokee Rose.'"

"Then hale her off!" cried Everard, bringing his hand down on the table with a force that made the candle jump in its socket. "I want no rosaceous specimens here, native or foreign. No—*the Cherokee Rose*—I have done with botany forever, I swear!" He spoke as if he had given many years of unrequited and fruitless study to that ungrateful science. "Send the baggage about her business! *The Cherokee Rose*, forsooth!" he repeated fleeringly.

He turned suddenly, hearing a slight scuffle without, and the next moment the flap of his tent was drawn back and the girl stood in the doorway, the flaming night behind her, and all her amber and white attire showing in soft splendor and full detail in the refined, subdued, pearly light of the single candle. The discomfited corporal, who had sought to detain her by as much force as he dared to exert, was vaguely glimpsed in the background, sullenly resigning himself to wait to conduct her out of camp, as he saw that Everard had a mind now to give her an audience. Her first words had arrested the lieutenant's attention. He could not have constructed the sentences that issued from her trembling scarlet lips, but the sound of the Cherokee language had grown familiar in many weeks' sojourn here, and he understood its drift and made shift to reply.

"I have found your plaid-man," she cried. "Oh, the wicked one!" casting up her liquid eyes in aspiration. "Cut off his head! Cut it off clean!"

"But where? when was he found?" Everard exclaimed eagerly.

"Oh, now you have lent your ear to listen!" she cried triumphantly. She glanced warily over her shoulder to make sure that the corporal had not also lent his ear for the same purpose. Then leaning forward, the flap of the tent

still in one hand, her finger now and again cautiously laid on her lips, she detailed the strange metamorphosis of the Ancient Warrior into a Highland soldier which she had witnessed, and every word that he had said she repeated in English as she had heard it, with a faithful duplication of accent and gesture.

“ You were to come to Talassee, and he would not let you, — you the great red Capteny, and he the dust of the earth ! — where a feast was made for you, and the headmen waited, and many young and beautiful were to dance, and I was to dance. See ! — was I not to dance ? ”

Her anklets of white beads jingled in unison as she moved her slender restless feet in their buskins of fine white dressed doeskin.

“ And he wept — the plaid-man ! and cried for the French gold ! and said, ‘ He maunna ride at a’ the nicht ! He maunna ride — he maunna gang to Talassee wi’ the French gowd o’ saxty-twa ! Ohonari ! Ohonari ! He maunna ride at a’ the nicht.’ And then this plaid-man he sobbed much, and straightway said to himself that the smoke of far-away burning woods hurt his eyes — when it is because he is a squaw-man that he sheds tears, and is no great red Capteny and soldier. And does he not wear a petticoat every day of his life, like the woman that he is ? *He sheds tears !* And then he crept out, saying all the time, ‘ Oh, gude God, he maunna ride to Talassee — he maunna ride at a’ the nicht ! ’ And I, all unseen, followed him like his shadow, like his soul, through the night to the foot of the mountain where the trading-path skirts Chilhowee, and there he struck a flint and set the dry leaves afire, and then with a lighted torch he ran — ran like a deer — firing the woods here, there, everywhere ! Two Indians, coming from a hunt, saw him, but he gave them the slip. And the headmen are having the woods scoured for him. And I — I lost him in the night — for he ran very fast ! ”

As he stood listening Everard more than once changed color, and finally sat down, looking very grave.

The girl with only a momentary pause recommenced : “ And then I knew that you could not go to Talassee through the fiery woods, although the feast was made, and the headmen waited, and many were to dance, and I, too, was to dance, because that creature, in his plaid petticoat, said you had his French gold. Was it his, forsooth ? I do not understand ! And I lost him, but I went back from the mountain to Chilhowee Town, and there — oh, joy ! — there he stood once more in the likeness of the Ancient Warrior, — who must be very wroth, if there ever was any Ancient Warrior, — in his hunting-shirt and war-crown. And softly, very softly, like the mist slipping down the mountain-side I crept away here, and left him there, that the great red Capteny may descend upon him, and capture him, and wreak vengeance upon him, and break his great ugly bones, and give his woman’s petticoat to the dogs to tear ! ”

“ And is he there yet ? ” demanded Everard eagerly. “ Is he unaware that he is discovered ? ”

Her animated diction had left her breathless and speechless. She could only bow her head in assent, her lustrous eyes still fiery, her lips trembling with her panting breath.

Everard sprang up, tense and alert, keen and quick to see his error.

“ You shall have the French gold as a reward for your story if I find my tartan man as you say at Chilhowee. Say nothing to any one till I send you the French gold by the hand of Yachtino, the chief of Chilhowee, ” he said, hoping that thus the headmen might think that he had failed to notice the significant date of the coinage of the louis d’ors, since he parted so lightly from them. Thus he would avoid further dangerous machinations, for of course the pieces were not themselves essential to the validity of his report.

He was calling out hasty orders to the corporal in the pauses of his sentences to her, and in the next few moments he rode out of the camp at the head of a dozen mounted infantry-men, their red coats and burnished accoutrements showing in the flames still rioting along the mountain-side.

A sense of dawn was presently in the air,—the vague, undiscriminated, indescribable perception of the awakening of nature. It was not night, let the darkness gloom as it might. It was not night, let the light delay as it would. It was a new day, and every nerve acclaimed the fact with a revival of power. Everard met this new day in emerging from the forests near Chilhowee Town. The flames were dying out upon the mountain. A thin rain was falling, and misty moisture enveloped the higher slopes, where nevertheless here and there a pennant of fire waved through dull gray involutions of vapor. The smell of charred timber was rife on the air. The slate-tinted sky, the darkly looming purple mountains of the distance, the black, fire-swept steeps closer at hand, the Indian town as yet silent and still, the long, level stretches of the pallid, sere cornfields dimly striped with fine lines of the misting rain,—all were visible in the dull gray light as the party halted on the verge of the woods. Everard dismounted and went forth alone into the cornfields.

Callum MacIlvesty, facing in the opposite direction, heard naught, and saw naught but the dreary fire-smirched scene before him and the rain slowly descending with a steadiness which promised to make a day of it. He was too exhausted to think, to scheme further. He only knew that his ruse had succeeded; that Everard had not been decoyed to a terrible death; that the commissioners and their military escort would march to-day. But when he sought to forecast how he would fare, left alone and helpless in the country of the savage Cherokees, the puzzling problem so baffled

his tired brain — without food, as he was, aching in every muscle, and drenched to the very bones by the persistent rain — that he would fall asleep, still standing half supported by the pole, his war-bonnet and gourd head nodding after a fashion which must have revealed the sham that he was, had any discerning Indian chanced to pass that way. He dreamed strange things in these meagre snatches of sleep, — so strange that he thought he was still dreaming when, recovering his balance with a start and lifting his heavy eyelids, he saw Lieutenant Everard striding across the wet cornfield and heard his friendly voice calling, “Callum Bane ! Callum Bane !” as of yore.

Callum’s heart plunged and then stood still, as he perceived the reality of his impressions. Before he could decide upon his course the voice sounded anew, with a queer tremor in it : —

“ For God’s sake, Callum Bane, don’t hide from me ! I would n’t hurt a hair of your head for all the Cherokee country ! ”

In his rough, young-man fashion Everard had begun to tear off the Ancient Warrior’s war-bonnet and gourd vizard and hunting-shirt that, long subject to the weather’s hard usage, had grown ragged and rent with the climbing in and out of it by the stalwart Highlander, and before the transformation was complete the story of each was elicited. As they faced each other, Callum, conscience-stricken at the enormity of his offense and overwhelmed by the magnanimity of his friend, albeit debtor for his life, in forgiving him, suddenly burst into tears, exclaiming, “ Ohon ! Ohon ! I wish you would kill me ! ” and cast himself, in all his smoke-grimed, rain-soaked tartans, into the arms of the smart officer.

Everard chose to consider the blow as delivered under the extremity of provocation and in the quality of friend over a convivial bowl, and therefore his own personal affair.

He was willing to risk the carping comment of his mess, should it ever come to their knowledge that he had received this insult without requital from a man who had saved his life with so much forethought and ingenuity, and danger to his own,—a man who deemed he would have profited immeasurably by the officer's destruction, thus escaping the death which menaced him, or an ignominious punishment more terrible to him than death itself.

Everard, however, with his larger experience of life and wider outlook, saw the plot differently, perfectly rounded and in its entirety. He knew that the Cherokees would not dare to lure him to Talassee had they not some innocuous device by which to account for his disappearance thence. Their subtle intelligence had doubtless seized upon the fortuitous escape of the Highlander from custody as a thread to work into their web. For it was most natural that to this man, who had offended the officer and had cause to fear him, should be attributed his murder and consequent disappearance. The Highlander himself, easily found, seized, and destroyed after the departure of the troops from the country, could gainsay naught.

The lieutenant's military conscience, however, would not permit him to forgive so easily the escape from the guard-house and the lurking in hiding, these being notorious offenses of evil example and to the prejudice of good order and discipline. For not even the corporal who had had the custody of the prisoner knew that Callum had struck the officer, and the only witness, Mr. Taviston, had utterly forgotten the blow as a matter of no consequence,—being frantic with excitement concerning a new species of *Stuartia*, here found and at that time unknown to any catalogue, but since called *Stuartia montana*. The corporal and the other soldiers supposed only that Callum had become intoxicated in the society of his superiors and had drunkenly and foolishly contrived a troublesome escape from custody. For

this breach of discipline, Callum was destined to undergo in due time extra guard duty.

Everard was explaining this to him as being a part of his military obligations and not to gratify a personal grudge. " You are still under arrest, you know, Callum Bane ! " Everard reminded him.

" I care na, I care na — onything ye will ! Only I maun hae a word wi' ye the noo, lad."

This word, albeit he was faint from fatigue, both ahungered and athirst, cold and shivering, having been drenched for hours with the keen chill rain, Callum so clamored to be allowed to speak that Everard could not constrain him to wait till after he should have been fed and warmed and clad anew.

" Na, na ! " Callum persisted, waving away the flask which the officer pressed upon him, but still clutching his friendly hand, " if I tak but ae sup ye wad say I am drunk when ye hear what I hae to tell ye ! " He paused for a moment to add weight to his words. " I hae seen that Frenchman wha hae made sic clavers an' turmoil amang the Cherokees."

" Where ? when ? " Everard asked breathlessly, his face suddenly grave.

Callum pointed down at the Ancient Warrior lying at his feet in all the dreary dislocations of disillusionment, — the tattered, befringed garments, the quaintly painted gourd head, with its ghastly effect of decapitation, its glorious warbonnet bedraggled and forlorn. " When I was that daft gomeril, — that big Injun," he replied.

" A white man ? "

Callum nodded and leaned against the officer. He could hardly stand. He felt too weak almost to speak, unless indeed he must.

" A Frenchman, Callum Bane ? " Everard asked again, vaguely incredulous. " How did you know he was French ? "

"By the lingo, man!" said Callum impatiently.

"Did he speak to you?" demanded Everard, looking keenly into the Highlander's pale face, all wet and shining with the rain.

In the mists on one side were vaguely glimpsed the tall cornstalks of the far-stretching fields, all writhen and bent by the wind, and with the gleams of sleet on their sere, pallid blades, but despite their motion he was aware that among them there were other tall, befringed, betasseled figures not dissimilar, something too distant for recognition, where doubtless the ever wily Indians were watching the conference. At the edge of the woods on the other side of the clearing stood the mounted detail of English soldiers, the glimmer of the sad gray day flashing back with a live, alert glitter from the burnished steel of their arms and their scarlet coats, all quick to note the fraternal, familiar attitude of the officer and soldier, and internally to comment on this condescension, which had already resulted in a breach of discipline and threatened continued insubordination.

"Did the Frenchy speak to me? Na! I was that big Injun, I tell ye!" pointing at the prideful gourd face now staring up at them from among the straw. "Na! nane minted a word at me, except yon *ageya*, — the Injun lass ye know, — an' she ca' me 'Gude-sire!' *Gude-sire!*!" Callum laughed dreamily, then suddenly put his hand up to his head, in the effort to recall the importance of the disclosure.

"A nip of brandy now, Callum," — the officer pressed the flask, eager for the detail, — "and then you 'll remember."

"I winna taste it," Callum rejoined sternly, "for then ye 'll say I was drunk an' telled ye but idle clavers. What 's your wull?" he added, as if bewildered.

"How do you know the man is French?" demanded Everard.

"He spoke in French," replied Callum.

“To the Indians ?”

“He spoke in Cherokee to the Injuns, and then to himself in French,” responded Callum definitely.

Everard was silent for a moment. Important interests of the government, the peace of the colonies, the policy of the cession of land, the possible permanent repulse of the French, and on the other hand the triumphant enormous extension of the French empire in America hung upon this slight incident. Therefore to make sure, to prevent the possibility of deception or mistake, he asked, thinking the words that Callum had heard might have other signification, “What did he say, Callum ? What did he say to himself ?”

“*Tong pee per lee. A bong char bong rar,*” Callum solemnly repeated.

Everard burst out laughing hysterically. He was convinced. He was all tremulous at the momentous discovery that it had chanced to one of his command to make, eager, nay frenzied, to take instant advantage of it ; yet the accent of the solemn Highlander, to which the French of the Stratford-atte-Bowe variety would have had an eminently Gallic tang, outmastered his risibles, and he laughed with that curious duality of entity when he was never so serious before in his life.

The first duty, however, in putting into execution the plan which had instantly shaped itself in his mind, with a dozen variant details, was to take such order with the Highland soldier as should restore him to his normal mental and physical fitness. He shouted for aid to the soldiers, and presently Callum, mounted on a horse behind one of them,—for he was in no condition to guide the animal or even to retain his posture, save for a horse girth passed around his waist and the body of the man in the saddle,—was escorted back to camp, and still under arrest, bestowed in the snug winter-house devoted to the uses of a military

prison. There was no lack of hot lotions applied externally and internally, and good food and warm clothing; but the surgeon in attendance upon the party reported a fever, with a touch of delirium and a "sair hoast," as the patient himself described the measure of cold that he had caught.

To the surprise of all the force and the suspicious dismay of the Indians, the return to Charlestown was unaccountably delayed. The soldiers, wearying of their long inaction, the monotony of life in the Indian country, hampered as they were by the many unusual restrictions imposed upon conduct and camp to avoid all possible cause for clashes with the young Indian braves, had been in high spirits at the prospect of a speedy change, and their hopes were suddenly dashed by the countermanding of the orders to march. The commissariat fell into gloom, and as far as they dared remonstrated with the commander, predicting a famine ere Charlestown could be reached; and the quartermaster sergeant and his subordinates of the baggage contingent, foreseeing all the undoing of the more permanent arrangements of the baggage train, felt that never again could such triumphs of transportation be achieved — the stowage of large and unwieldy commodities in small compass, *multum in parvo* — as a lucky inspiration in packing had permitted in this instance.

Moreover, the fine days seemed gone. The weather offered an incalculable menace. Already the air was full of the misting autumnal rains, and the many turbulent rivers of the country would soon be out of their channels beyond even the deep crag-girt banks, rendering fording impossible and ferriage dangerous. Even snows might fall, early though it was in the season. In fact, one or two domes of the Great Smoky Range already showed glittering white against an ominous slate-tinted sky, as the soft, gauzy tissues of the mists parted before them, and again impenetrably veiled those frigid altitudes.

The commissioners themselves had grown obviously disaffected and doubtful; they were disposed to remonstrate, and one of them reproachfully coughed from time to time, occasionally from genuine affection and again from patent affectation. Only the meteorologic and botanic Mr. Taviston welcomed the lengthened opportunity, and since the flowers had all fallen under the repeated frosts and an unseasonable nipping freeze, he found a solace in investigating the climate itself, going about, a comfort to himself, and eke to say a wellspring of joy to others, with an umbrella above his head, to the ribs of which was suspended a thermometer at the height of his nose, taking acute scientific notes of the extraordinary variability of the temperature and the swift fickleness of the atmospheric changes. He was even disposed to climb the mountains to the snow line, to press his inquiries among the white domes of the great range, accompanied only by an Indian guide; but the stern interdiction of this enterprise by the commander precluded his wandering so far afield, and he was compelled to content himself with such specimens of weather as he could collate nearer at hand.

To the prevalent dissatisfaction Lieutenant Everard accorded only the most casual attention, obviously preoccupied, intent on his own thoughts, sternly determined, but sharing his conclusions with no adviser.

The civilians of the party naturally distrusted these *indicia* of changes of moment evidently impending, and felt some qualms as to his comparative youth and heady traits, some curiosity as to possible details of his instructions to which it might be they were not privy, some helpless anxiety lest for reasons satisfactory to himself, which they could not divine, he should venture to deviate from his orders. The commissioners were in the nature of things more or less men of consequence, accustomed to command, and to the habit of determining and shaping their own

course in life as the eventuation of circumstance should seem to require. They had not had the military training to an unquestioning obedience, the suppression of natural curiosity, the relinquishment of all responsibility and individual identity, in the existence of a corporate body, subject to the volition of a superior. They chafed in the sense of helplessness, and from time to time eyed him greedily in hopes of catching from his manner some intimation as to his ultimate plans. In response to more open expressions of curiosity, he had flatly refused to gratify it, and the courtesy and apparent consideration in his phrase made him seem only the more inscrutable.

"You will pardon me, I am sure, but Gad, sir, my duty does not permit me to be explicit. The march is postponed, but you will not be required to move without information," he replied suavely, but with a flash of the eye which intimated that he would tell them when he could no longer avoid it, and when all the rest of the world must know.

While the camp thus settled down to its former routine, grumbling and speculating variously as to the causes that had necessitated the countermanding of the orders to march, the Cherokees were alarmed for the interests of the projected cession of land. Their earlier fears had been quieted in great measure by the recovery of the French gold, the louis d'ors of the coinage of the current year, thus falling readily into the trap which Everard had warily set for them. They concluded that since he had given the gold pieces so casually to the Indian girl as a reward for her detection of his runagate soldier he had not noticed the date with its cogent significance, having them so short a time in his possession. Certainly it was great munificence, but this was the more easily accounted for as the louis d'ors really belonged to another man, and the officer seemed generous without loss, for the Cherokees did not understand that their value must needs be returned to Eachin MacEachin. As the In-

dians were not admitted familiarly within the camp, and the soldiers were not free to wander without, there could be only futile surmises as to the reasons for the postponement of the march. Secret observations of the camp taken from the river and the opposite bank intimated much activity among the farriers. Perhaps the horses were all to be reshod. But surely such a necessity could not be in the nature of a surprise to the Capteny Gigagei. Another day ensued a great overhauling of the baggage for clothing of heavier weight, in anticipation of severe weather. The commissioners bargained with the Indians for some furs fashioned into match-coats, and the lieutenant himself, being obliged to wear the hated British uniform, ordered blankets of the fine dressed otter and panther skins, for which he paid in English guineas: he had no more louis d'ors. The postponement gradually came to be accepted as the result of the sudden unseasonable spell of cold weather.

Therefore it fell like a thunderclap upon the headmen, when suddenly one day Lieutenant Everard took advantage of a personal visit which the great chief Tanaesto was making to him in his tent, to declare that he had certain knowledge that the Cherokees harbored amongst them a Frenchman who sought to spirit them up against the British government, despite the fact that they had so lately firmly shaken hands anew with it. He protested that unless they instantly surrendered to him this miscreant, chargeable with he knew not how many of the crimes laid at their door, he would report to the royal governor the fact that he had ascertained his presence here in the heart of the Cherokee country, and this would annul the privileges they expected to enjoy under the treaty thus rendered void, and destroy the possibility of the cession itself.

But for that single phrase, but for the interests dependent upon the cession, but for the fact that this purchase money for the lands would enable the Cherokees to secure the mu-

nitions of war to wrench not only this limited territory but their whole country from the encroaching British grasp, as well as sustain them in a certain independence in their relations with their expected French allies, — but for these obvious dictates of policy, the commissioners' train and military escort would have been set upon by unnumbered hundreds and destroyed in the instant.

Even as it was, however, their safety was in a great part assured by the fact that this episode took place only within the knowledge of the wily chiefs. The populace — those "mad young men," so difficult to restrain, whose impetuosity so often cost the nation dear — could not have been held back had this demand been suddenly publicly urged. And indeed the chiefs themselves were between two fires ; for if aught should befall the French officer through their pusillanimity or treachery, it was obvious they could hope for no further aid from the great French king, without which they could not save their national existence.

Admire the collected Tanaesto's aplomb ! Without one moment's hesitation he denied the accusation, — utterly oblivious of the future, — so definitely, so instantly, that Everard himself, closeted in his tent with three or four Indians who had accompanied Tanaesto, felt a momentary doubt. Could Callum have been dreaming ? — the vision of the Frenchman only a figment of the fever then laying hold upon him, the words an echo ? — some reminiscence sounding anew in his delirium ?

"But you have a white man, a Frenchman, here in the nation," Everard sternly persisted.

"A white man in the nation ? Several here and there in the lower towns. Oh, yes, the Capteny says the gracious truth. But these are English or Scotch, never French. Some there are who like the Cherokee methods and settle in the tribe. But here in the Overhill towns only one white man, an Englishman — that is to say, a Virginian."

Everard, staring fixedly at Tanaesto, shook his head, and the Indian interpreter mechanically repeated the gesture, as if the parties for whom he served as a means of communication were blind as well as deaf to all but him.

Most unlikely did Everard consider it that an Englishman would dare to linger here alone in the present disorganized state of the Cherokee country and the inflamed public sentiment against the British.

"This man — who I fear is no Englishman — sojourned in Moy Toy's town of Great Tellico," Everard persisted. "This I know. The great chief will perceive there are no limits to my knowledge."

With this corollary, confirmatory of his proposition, the Indians hardly dared to further deny. A sudden stillness ensued; and this desperate silence, long unbroken, was an invisible appeal one to the others, each waiting for some intrepid invention of some one else that might serve to rescue the situation.

Everard smiled grimly as his sarcastic eyes traveled the rounds from one confused, downcast face to the other. "Since he is a Virginian, as you say, an Englishman so far, I should be glad to see him," persisted Everard, relishing their discomfort. "I should not like it to be said that I left an only countryman in this remote wilderness without an effort to exchange a word with him, a homelike greeting."

"If he is now at Great Tellico, I know not; it has been long since I saw him," Tanaesto qualified. Then realizing that this belated negation could not nullify all that had gone before, "Doubtless he will be glad to take you by the hand," he concluded falteringly.

"Doubtless. I shall do myself the honor to wait upon him there, and shall also take this occasion to pay my respects to the great Moy Toy."

Everard smiled sardonically, grimly triumphant, for the

leave-taking of the graceful, ceremonious Indians was like the hasty scuttling away of a group of culprits evading the clutch of custody.

The camp had been hastily broken ; all was now gleeful stir and activity. Everard had waited long, but he had reached the limit of his patience and the necessity to exercise it simultaneously. MacIlvesty was sufficiently recovered to have regained the full use of his faculties, and he depended upon the Highlander's identification of the man, whom he had seen in familiar conversation with the Indians at one of their most secret ceremonies, speaking Cherokee to them and French in soliloquy. Everard would take no substitute for this man ! Lest some dull under-trader, some runaway apprentice, finding it easier to turn Cherokee than work at a trade in the colonies, be palmed off on him in lieu of this forked-tongued schemer, he had awaited the Highlander's recovery, despite his impatience. He realized that should he miss his grip at the opportune moment the chance would be gone and forever. He would confront Calum MacIlvesty with this sojourner at Tellico whom he doubted not to be the French emissary who had occasioned a world of trouble in readjusting the Cherokees on their former basis with the British government. Unless opportunity should prove amazingly elusive, he would arrest this man and carry him to Charlestown, where the consideration of the problems which he embodied could be shifted upon those more qualified to undertake it, the colonial diplomats.

Everard's determination to proceed further into the Cherokee country necessitated the detail of some portion of his plan to the commissioners whom he must needs drag with him, since his force was too slight to divide, and he could not leave them without a guard at Ioco. Though firm as adamant and steeled against any remonstrance, he had dreaded their efforts to deter him, their insistence that he was transcending his instructions, that he was merely the

commander of their bodyguard, and required to act only in the interests of the cession. The fluttered squawking of the botanist, the deep basso-profundo rumble of the commissioner whose fad was geology, the appeal to his official conscience and his oath by the diplomat proper, the politician, the piercing fife-like note of the surveyor's voice in protest,—all sounded coherently in his imagination long before he made the disclosure, and sooth to say, sounded nowhere else. For the "gentlemanly old ladies" showed unexpected mettle; they applauded his determination, belittled the possible danger they might incur, commended his discretion, and urged the instant setting forward of the force before the man could be spirited away and the Indians make head in their schemes to conceal all evidences of his identity and machinations.

XIV

LAROCHE, however, as far as his safety was concerned, was more secure at Tellico Great than he could have been elsewhere, and he appreciated this, for both Moy Toy and he had been speedily advised of the untoward discovery of the secret of his presence here and the lame and futile effort of Tanaesto to account for it innocuously. Where the Cherokees were in force, as in one of the greater "mother towns," he could more effectually claim the national protection than if, seeking refuge in flight, he should be apprehended in some secluded outlying region where only a few scattered tribesmen would be receptive to his appeal. Therefore at Tellico he determined to stand his ground, albeit he doubted both the will and the capacity of the Indians to hold out against the demand of the English officer. He argued that with so small a force as the escort of the commissioners, coercion was manifestly not contemplated, and the British commander was risking the dangers of the Indian country, disaffected though it was, with no protection save the ostensible comity of the already jeopardized treaty. Unassisted reason and logic were hardly to be relied upon in Indian negotiation. Reproaches for a broken faith needs an unimpeachable counter-record to render them practicable. Laroche feared, as the last resource, bribes, large, tempting, irresistible.

At that moment his staunch scheme of empire, rebuilt on the ruins of a score of fantastic projections of old, braced and held to interdependent cohesion in a thousand details, seemed to him also a mere phantasm, the immaterial outline of the functions of a state, a spectre of power, to dis-

solve into nullity at the first cockcrow of the lordly realities of established rule. He had but expended himself, his time, his efforts, his liberty, it might even be his life itself, that the crafty Moy Toy should have the opportunity of driving a more thrifty bargain with the British interest because of the formidable character of the threatened defection ; or mayhap, indeed, only for the sake of a personal gift, — a finer rifle, or a trifle of embroidered and gold-laced suits of apparel, — he would consent to bring anew the nation under British domination until such time as the yoke grew cumbersome to his fitful ambition and he was minded to throw it off again.

Naturally Moy Toy could not read these thoughts in the face of his friend, but he marked his changing color and partly interpreted his agitation. Because of the stress of his religion, — a very queer and inconvenient restriction the savage deemed it, — never would Laroche lift a weapon against his fellow man, except in legitimate warfare. And yet he was eminently a proper man, to use the language of the day, light, active, with muscles like steel wire and strong with a latent staying power. When personally threatened he would offer no aggression, save in self-defense, and even now, in this stress of realized jeopardy, he insisted with all his arts of persuasion that Moy Toy should give over the idea of a massacre of the advancing party, with several delectable items of the horrors of a surprise and friendly lure to merge at last into fierce and wholesale murder, which the chief planned with many a sly and furtive smile, and which met with open and applausive assent from his councilors assembled.

“They come in peace, relying on your honor ; let them go in peace,” urged Laroche, as in duty bound, from the standpoint of soldier, Christian, and patriot.

“They have not my honor in their keeping,” Moy Toy lowered. “I do not love your ugly religion !”

Nevertheless, he suffered himself to be gainsaid in the paramount interests of the land cession, and Laroche felt at the end of all things.

If Moy Toy were to have no fun out of the rash adventure of the embassy, the embassy would certainly profit at the expense of the interloper. He it was who must suffer between the two. He knew that this sudden unforeseen demonstration against him personally was obviously fraught with too great danger to the government's commissioners for the military commander of the escort to lightly undertake it or to relinquish it without advantage. Nothing less could it portend than the arrest of the French emissary and his removal in the British interest from the Cherokee country. Laroche's experimental resourceful mind became suddenly blank in the contemplation of the vista of long days, nay years, in prison, at the will of a British colonial magnate or on a quibble of British law. And then this suggestion opened a new speculation. What if, being without his uniform, without command, in the discharge of no specific military duty, he should be held as a spy or as a civil prisoner, and responsible for certain murders which the Cherokees had committed on British subjects either with the sanction of Moy Toy or on that system of personal individual warfare which in modern civilized times is called feud, and which the Cherokee autonomy countenanced. Brave though his spirit was, Laroche quailed at the imputed instigation of these horrors which he had sought to avert and had openly condemned at much personal risk.

He was keenly reminiscent of the day when a previous expedition had arrived at the town of Tellico Great and he had then been of the embassy. With that strange dual capacity of the mind, albeit his every faculty might seem otherwise absorbed, he was conscious of all the details of the event which he now watched as it were from the inside, — the placing of the appurtenances of the town to the best

advantage, the gathering of the warriors and braves, as well as women and children, arrayed each in the finest toggery. The "beloved square" had been swept and resanded, the public buildings were painted anew. There in each of the four open, piazza-like cabins the incumbents of the high municipal offices were ranged on the tiers of seats in the wonted order of their relative rank,—the medicine and religious men, the war-captains, the aged councilors, and Moy Toy in the place of chief. Always an impressive figure, he had assumed an added dignity in the doubly conferred imperial title, from both British and French powers,¹⁰ superimposed upon his hereditary municipal chieftaincy, though the latter distinction was the only point of supremacy in which the Cherokee nation itself now acquiesced. He sat in his place upon the white divan, his iridescent feather-woven mantle glittering in the sun, his polled head plumed with eagle quills, about his neck a single strand of those glossy fresh-water Tennessee pearls, almost as large as filberts, a size then rare, but even yet taken occasionally from the *Unio margaritiferus* of our sandy river banks. A great bead, which he valued far more, wrought painfully with years of labor from the conch shell, ivory-like in its polish and tint, was suspended in the middle of his forehead. His guard of immediately attendant warriors was about him, and Laroche sat at his side.

Arrayed too in aboriginal splendor was the French officer. This was hardly bravado on his part, for he had long ago lost sight of that uniform which he had worn to Great Tellico, for Moy Toy had sequestered it, lest it remind him in some inscrutable way of those events when he had so nearly lost his life at the stake, and thus by exciting resentment diminish his utility to the nation. This garb would scarcely have much commended him to the Englishman whose advent he momently expected, but with that acute Gallic self-consciousness he winced from the anticipated

wonder at his attire, averse yet scornful. But Moy Toy was not to be withstood, and the adopted tribesman was nearly as fine as the prince. He too wore a necklace of pearls, that set off the fairer tints of his throat with less barbaric effect than the Indian's own bauble. His face was fantastically streaked with paint, yet its keen lines and the fine expressiveness of his eyes were definitely asserted. His trim figure was encased in a shirt and leggings of white dressed doeskin with long fringes wrought with scarlet feathers; his buskins were dyed scarlet, and he wore scarlet feathers mounted high on his blond hair. It seemed to him now, as he sat silent thus and waited, that the agonies of suspense were decreed to him as a portion. He could hear the beating of his heart in the absolute stillness of the assemblage as, with the stoicism of Indian patience and endurance, the Cherokees, motionless and silent, awaited the appearance of the commissioners' party.

The bland blue sky seemed waiting too, so still it was. Here and there were cloud masses of a dazzling whiteness and variant density and depth of tone, as if to illustrate the infinite scope of the possible interpretations of this tint, technically an absence of color. Bright as they were, as they swung motionless in the sunlit air, wherever their shadows fell on the velvet azure of the distant mountains the hue deepened and dulled to a violet, subdued as with the expunging of light. The snow on the mountain domes near at hand showed a sharp contrast to the red and yellow and brown of the brilliant leafage still on the steep slope below. The haze in the intermediate valleys was like a silver gauze—of a consistency that suggested a fabric. Even as close as the willows along the river bank it preserved this illusion, and now veiled them from sight and now withdrew, revealing their slim idyllic wands, all leafless and whitely frosted and trembling in some imperceptible pulsation of the currents of the air. Many a bare bough with the distinctness

of some fine etching was reflected in the shimmering water, here a smooth and silver expanse, and here a rippling steely sheen. Upon its surface a flock of swans, glittering white in the sunshine, floated into view, and then like a fantasy drifted suddenly into the invisibilities of the mist and the shadow. Far away the booming note of a herd of buffaloes came to the ear and was silent, and again one could not so much as hear the throng of waiting Cherokees draw a breath. It might seem that a spell had fallen upon the town, the silent assemblage, the loitering clouds, the still mountains, and that they had thus stood waiting for unnumbered ages till some magic sound should break their bonds.

It came suddenly. The dreaming swans lifted their heads to listen, then with an abrupt unmusical cry began to swim swiftly down toward the confluence with the Tellico River. A dog barked and was silent once more. Then distant though it was, indeterminate, merely a pulsing throb in the air, Laroche recognized the far-away beating of a drum, and could hardly distinguish it, save by its steadier, more rhythmic throb, from the agitated beating of his own heart.

Perhaps it may have been due to the influences of mental solitude, as it were, and much introspective brooding, always averse to the prosaic mundane atmosphere ; perhaps to that undefined fascination which the life of the Cherokees of the earlier epochs of our knowledge of them exerted upon certain temperaments among the strangers who sojourned with them ; perhaps merely to personal antagonism and national prejudice, but the sound of the British fife and drum, now distinct, playing a foolish air, the sight of the British flag, the appearance of the embassy, half military, half civilian, some mounted, some afoot, partly English, partly Scotch Highlanders, the progress accommodated ill enough to the beat of the quickstep, affected Laroche as singularly crass and uncouth.

The undisguisable contempt of the commander for the

Indians and all that appertained to them, the absolute lack of comprehension of the subtler elements of their character, the determination to secure the object he sought without any recognition of the complicated details of the environment, gave a certain effect of ignorance to the address and standpoint of the highly civilized man that by contrast made the aboriginal, with his mystery of antiquity, his symbolism, his ceremonial, his inscrutability, the gravity of his courtesy, seem to have profited by the lack of modern education and to be endowed with learning by inheritance and intuition.

Without any embellishment of ceremony in his presence, Everard sauntered casually across the "beloved square" toward the Indian chief, wreathing his unwilling features into such a smile as he deemed might answer for the occasion, but he stretched out his hand benignly. In the service of the king it could not hurt his dignity to shake hands with an Injun.

Moy Toy, his beaded and braceleted arms folded across his bosom, took no notice of the proffered hand, but bowed halfway to the ground.

Everard, in no wise disconcerted, cared no more for the declination of this courtesy — nay, not half so much — than if his favorite hound, Brutus, whom he was training to the observance of this gentility of greeting, had withheld his paw; for sometimes Brutus would shake, and sometimes in the exercise of canine freedom the paw of Brutus was his own, since Everard's cuff of disappointment was but a half hearted demonstration, and no dog or horse stood in much fear of cruelty from him.

That Everard was a fine, handsome man, and by his profession accustomed to etiquette and parade, gave additional point to his lack of ostentation and formality in the present instance. He evidently did not think it worth his while. But he wagged his well-shaped head eagerly in serious argument when he forthwith entered upon the subject of his

mission without preamble, dispensing with the usual ceremonials of eating, drinking, and smoking among the Indians. Perhaps he truly thought that in view of the slightness of his force the hospitality of the savages was not to be trusted at so inimical a juncture. The commissioners, all mounted, looked on at a little distance, and the soldiers were hard by, drawn up in close order just without the "beloved square." Some were in the scarlet gear of the British foot-soldier and others in the dark blue and green tartan of the Forty-Second Regiment, and this variation of costume, albeit they were ranged separately in their respective ranks, gave a sort of motley guise to the command and impaired the effect of their number. But in truth, all told, the military escort mustered scarcely threescore, for the demonstration was essentially a pacific one, and Everard but expected to wield the weapons of right reason rather than brute force. He might, however, have done better execution with the latter, for he was no diplomatist.

It was Everard's faithful conviction that the government's emissaries habitually treated the Indians too seriously in seeking to adopt their social methods in conference, and that thus the civilized ambassador was a fool from his own point of view and a butt of ridicule to the Indians, who could but mark his failure in aboriginal etiquette in a thousand undreamed-of details. Simplicity, candor, directness, he held, became a bold Briton, and he would make no concessions to please the Indians and foster their sense of their own consequence by letting them see him play the condemned monkey, aping their fantastic savage ceremony.

Wherefore he stood, for he was not invited to sit, but he cared no more for the implied derogation than for the courtesies of such as they. He leaned negligently one hand on his sheathed sword, its point on the ground, and did not even maintain an erect attitude, as one obviously should in addressing a prince, nay, an emperor twice crowned by Brit-

ish and French authority. But this dereliction was not intentional. In truth there was a good deal of Lieutenant Everard in one piece, and in common with many other tall people he was disposed at times to loll and make his superfluous length comfortable. Not thus, however, did he conduct himself on parade or in the presence of a military superior or his excellency the royal governor, and well aware was Moy Toy of this. Moreover, his beautiful hair was not so well powdered as it was wont to be, and even his hat, which he still wore, was cocked casually askew.

Perhaps the consciousness of these facts, trivial yet significant, rendered Moy Toy the less capable of being pricked in conscience by the long list of fractures which the old treaty had suffered at his hands.

“And now,” said Everard, stooping to metaphor, “the path, so red with the blood of the English colonists and British soldiers and the slain Cherokee braves and made so crooked by the wiles of the pestiferous Louisiana French, has been whitened and straightened out by the magnanimity of the great British sovereign, his majesty King George. He has forgiven the treachery of the Cherokees because like children they could not reason aright, and like the blind they could not walk straight. He has intended to purchase large quantities of land from the tribe, that they might have the means to build up all the former prosperity of the nation which their wickedness caused to be pulled down. He expects to send traders once more to the Cherokee country, that the Indians may be furnished with goods for their necessities at a low and uniform price. He will maintain a system of weights and measures amongst them to which the traders will be required to conform. Armorers will he send to mend their guns free of charge, one gunsmith to every town, and artisans to instruct them in the methods and manufactures of civilization. And in return for so much clemency what did the Cherokees promise in the arti-

cles of the new treaty? A fair and firm friendship, a forbearance of murder and fire-raising on the frontier, the surrender of any white men of whatever nationality who aided them in the war against Great Britain, and the solemn promise that they would not suffer any Frenchman to come into their country to trade, to plant, or to build, lest they be again spirited up against the English to subvert this new treaty so faithfully signed and sealed and witnessed."

He paused and silence fell suddenly, save for the far-away booming of the buffaloes, the murmurous monotone of the river, the vague stir of a breeze from the mountains beginning to clash the bare boughs together and lift the folds of the British flag.

"Moy Toy," Everard resumed with a weighty manner, "the ink of that signature is hardly dry, and yet so early I find a Frenchman installed amongst you. And there," he threw out his hand at arm's length, "there is the man!"

His eyes roaming around had singled out Laroche and now dwelt upon him with an expression at once scornful and upbraiding. Then his attention traveled fleeringly up and down the barbaric details of the garb of the splendidly decorated white man, who winced under the voiceless jeer of the "perfidie Albion," and whose gorge rose within him while yet he quaked to encounter this enmity.

Moy Toy, visibly hesitant, replied at length.

It was his desire, he stated, to be at peace with the British king, although he would not or could not protect from the encroachments of the colonists the Cherokees whom he had once called his children. Moy Toy held himself, in fact, as the friend and brother of that king,— which statement reached such a point of sensitiveness in Everard's organization as to cause him to snort suddenly in surprise and indignation.

But Moy Toy, although maintaining his dignity of port, was hardly equal to himself. He could play a double part

easily enough, but to adjust the multiplicity of deceits requisite for this emergency in good relation to the interest of the tribe, to forfeit nothing of the expected French support and yet avoid the jeopardy of the price of the lands to be ceded to the British, passed even his measures of duplicity. He sought to adopt the wile that Tanaesto had earlier essayed.

The stranger was English — so he said; for himself he did not know; he could not pretend to decide; he was no linguister; he was all for peace; but the Great Spirit in his unfathomable wisdom had given men many tongues, with which indeed they talked too much.

“Ha!” Everard exclaimed sardonically, “they have been at that since the days of Babel!”

He paused that the interpreter might repeat his words, the while Everard transferred his flouting gaze from Laroche to the noble figure of Moy Toy, with no sort of appreciation of the dignity of its aspect, the subtle force of its facial expression, the picturesque barbarity of its ornament and garb. To him, in common with many of the British soldiers and colonists of the day, Moy Toy represented merely “old Injun” or “greasy red stick.” Everard had, however, an especial relish for the perplexity that looked out from among the wrinkles of his eyes, wrought by many a problem of statecraft, and his pondering, anxious, outwitted despair. The officer waited for a moment, expectant that Moy Toy would advance a new argument; then, as the chief remained silent, Everard proceeded with his own solution of the problem.

“Perhaps in Charlestown they may know how to tell a Frenchman from an Englishman. If this man is a loyal subject of King George he will not grudge the detention in so good a cause, and I pledge my honor that he shall be put to no charges for the expense of the journey; if a Frenchman, the colonial authorities may take him in hand then and I shall be free of him.”

Whatever his deficiencies as a diplomat, Lieutenant Everard certainly did not lack courage. He lifted his head suddenly; his sword swung back with his left hand on its hilt; tense, erect, he strode forward a dozen resolute paces, and, that the intention of the act might be obvious to all who witnessed it, struck the cowering Laroche on the shoulder with the stern cry, "In the king's name!"

The sound seemed a spell to raise the devil withal. Elicted like an echo, dependent on the tone, yet magnified a thousandfold, an inarticulate cry broke forth from the tribesmen, protesting, frantic, but menacing. The crowd surged this way and that, and Lieutenant Everard, suddenly mindful of the safety of his soldiers, turned, his chin high in the air, and his head still haughtily posed, to glance where they stood, a thought more compact than before, a scant three-score, with the savages circling in hundreds tumultuously about them.

"You would not dispute his majesty's authority!" Everard stiffly held his ground; for Moy Toy, irate, commanding, although visibly agitated, ordered him in no set phrase to desist. "He is a Frenchman and an enemy!" urged Everard. "He is no Cherokee!"

"He has been made a great 'beloved man'!" protested Moy Toy. "He is a Cherokee by adoption!"

The words roused the populace to renewed clamors. No heed took the "mad young men" of the frowning faces of their elders, the silent gestures of Moy Toy beseeching a hearing.

There is in that inarticulate murmur of the wrath of a mob something so menacing, so daunting, so indefinably terrible, that even Everard was receptive to an admonition so growlingly enforced. He took his hand from the Frenchman's shoulder lest in having it removed for him he might be torn in pieces. The implacable murmur still rose, the crowds still surged, and Laroche, half ashamed yet wholly

reassured, feared that he looked as smug as he felt, while a glitter of satisfaction and triumph shone in Moy Toy's eyes. They narrowed as he gazed steadily, threateningly, with a latent devilish thought, at Everard, so entirely at his mercy. A corner was a very tight fit for Lieutenant John Francis Everard, but he was fairly in it. He was accustomed to disport himself freely in the open, and the wriggles incident to a confined space did not suit his muscles, his size, or his temper. He made an effort to wrench himself from it.

"Mighty fine! mighty fine!" he said sneeringly to the Frenchman. "You are sane enough, sir, and sober enough, to know what poor stuff this is,—what pitiful dupes you are befooling and befuddling! Faugh! your deceipts sicken me!"

He looked with a snarl, which he designed to be a withering smile, over the fantastic apparel of the Frenchman, but Lieutenant Everard was as much out of countenance as a man of his stamp could well be.

"Zounds!" he resumed, still seeking to recover the control of the situation, and shaking off Moy Toy's restraining hand laid upon his arm, "we'll hear the fellow himself. Since you are English, give us your name, sirrah!"

He was consciously and blatantly rude, rejoicing in his capacity to be independent of the varnish with which such occasions are sleeked over.

Laroche's blood began to rise, his eye to sparkle. Despite his awful, imminent jeopardy,—for who could say how the scene might even yet result,—the spirit of the fray quivered through his blood. "If it may please your excellency," he said in his usual clear tones and precise enunciation, "yonder stands a man in your ranks to whom I am personally known. Your excellency might prefer to believe his account of me rather than my own."

Everard stared blankly and secretly winced. The man's politeness had a whetted edge, that cut like ridicule. The title of "excellency," so far above the usage of the lieuten-

ant's rank and deserts, might have been conferred in ignorance or propitiation, but taken in conjunction with his own rude address seemed as apt as a fleer.

Everard was at once doubtful and bewildered. The stranger's English, so far as the construction of his sentences and choice of words went, was perfect. There was, however, something in his intonation which grated on the Briton's ear. Nevertheless, there were many variations of provincial accent, especially in the colonies. Everard, in fact, believed that no one here could speak the language with purity, as if it had suffered a sea change in coming over the water.

Turning toward the ranks, he perceived a touch of consciousness on Callum MacIlvesty's face, and was startled to remember that it was his original intention to confront the two, that Callum might identify this man as the French-speaking familiar of the Ancient Warrior of Chilhowee. By a gesture he summoned the Highlander to his side, and simultaneously the Frenchman stepped forth and stood beside Moy Toy. The Indian's eyes were all aglitter, and a tremor agitated the feathers stiffly upright on his polled head.

"MacIlvesty, did you ever before see this man?" demanded the officer, while the two eyed each other.

"Aye, sir, mony a time," replied Callum MacIlvesty.

Everard stared. "And where?"

"At one Jock Lesly's trading-house at Ioco Town, sir."

Whither was this tending? The expression of the officer's face became amazed, concerned, intent. The flutter among the head feathers of Moy Toy was suddenly stilled.

"When was this?" the military catechist demanded.

"Nigh on a year ago come Easter, sir."

The triumph in the man's face, its suggestion of covert ridicule, nettled Everard. Into what fool's play had he been lured?

"*Why, Callum!*" he said in a reproachful murmur aside; then aloud, "What's his name?"

Callum shook his head. "I dinna ken, sir ; I misdoubt." "What was he called ?" the lieutenant mended the phrase. "Tam — Tam Wilson."

"Oh Callum — Callum Bane !" once more the officer's admonitory whisper reached him. "And where was he said to hail from ?" Everard added aloud.

"Virginia, sir," faltered the Highland soldier.

It was becoming definite in Everard's mind that Callum, all agog about the French, as the Highland soldiery, who had often triumphantly encountered them, forever were, and hearing much of suspected machinations among the Indians, had but dreamed of the French enemy beside the effigy of the Indian Warrior and had heard only in fancy, perhaps in the inception of the fever, the words that he repeated. For evidently this man was not only well known to him, but was also long a familiar of the English trading-station in the Cherokee nation. Perhaps even yet the young fellow's mind was not quite clear.

Nevertheless, since the ordeal had been in his defense and for his sake, Everard was minded to be gentle with him, although the false position into which Callum had involved him burned the officer's pride like fire.

"Why did you think he was French, MacIlvesty ?" he asked openly.

"Because," said Callum, with a keen resentment against himself, the officer, the arch-deceiver, the untoward facts themselves, that he could not make the truth as he knew it now, as he was sure of it, appear as aught but a falsehood or a folly, "he spoke French — he spoke it to himself ! — when I saw him last, a fortnight ago, amang the Injuns."

"And, Callum," said Laroche familiarly, "did you never hear an Englishman speak French ? Why, lad, I myself have e'en heard a Scotchman's tongue wagging into it !"

His eyes twinkled as if in reminiscence, and Everard, remembering the peculiarities of the Highlander's accent, was

minded to mark anew the familiarity of this Tam Wilson with him. He himself had not spoken his Christian name aloud, but the stranger knew it, and with no prompting called him "Callum."

Bewildered, raging internally, humiliated, Callum was ordered to his former place in the ranks, having only succeeded, because of the artifice of this arch-strategist and the intractability and paucity of the perverse facts, in identifying this Frenchman as an Englishman, to the satisfaction, or rather dissatisfaction, of his superior officer.

Of all people incompetent to use power without its abuse the Cherokees were preëminent. The turbulent mob had been quick to discern in the result of the conference that their adopted tribesman, the French officer, was obviously triumphant ; that Moy Toy, although standing like a statue, was overjoyed, with gleaming wide eyes and an elated port. They could ill afford magnanimity toward these people, so many grudges as a nation and as individuals did they owe the English, consequent on the slaughters and fire-raising and punitive famine they had suffered at the hands of the British troops in the warfare of the preceding years. Their note of comment had lost its tone of appeal, of indignation, of protest. It was swelling now and again into a savage roar of awful import, of reprisal, of scorn, of eager brutality.

Laroche heard in it the knell of all his hopes. This precipitate action would forever frustrate the fruition of his work here, — the gathering and organization of the tribal forces, the transportation of supplies, the plan of his campaign, — and with this, his success, his promotion, his hard-earned guerdon, for which he had labored so diligently, so discreetly, so valiantly. He was not ready to strike yet — not yet ! A premature blow now would preclude all those sequences of aggression so carefully planned, for the forces of the campaign were as yet unprepared ; the English would be first in the field, and the tribal remnants of the Indian

nations taken in detail and succession would be overwhelmed, intimidated, scattered, before the carefully aggregated resources of the French expedition could be made effective and available.

It was necessary that he should think very fast. And yet when he spoke his words seemed quite casual, almost irrelevant. "As to Callum MacIlvesty," he said to Everard, "why, I hardly know what to make of Callum! He always seemed jealous of me on account of Jock Lesly's beautiful daughter, Miss Liliias, — who was much too good for either of us!" he stipulated gallantly. "But I should never have suspected Callum of an invention like this!"

Everard looked at him keenly. This added another point in favor of his identity as a Virginian, — his familiarity with the names of the members of the trader's household; another reason why his image should intrude into the troubled delirium of the Highland soldier, — an old romance, with heart burnings and rivalries. Little wonder that in the distorted mental images of fever the hated figure of perhaps the fortunate suitor should appear invested with the added opprobrium of the national enemy.

The buoyant airy grace of this figure, even in the Indian garb, the volatile but bated aggressiveness of manner, the joyous, yet capable, intellectual expression of face, the handsome eyes and regular features suggested that he might appear to no contemptible advantage in the estimation of a girl as contrasted with the grave, reserved, proud, and exacting Highlander, with many an inherited sorrow to make him serious and many a personal privation to make him bitter. With his youth and strength and the natural amiability of his nature Callum could on occasion throw off the consciousness of these weights and be merry. But this fellow's element was the air itself, and the necessity to be serious was like the clipping of wings.

"Come, sir, let us have an end of this," said Everard.

"Being English you cannot object to go to Charlestown and make your standing clear to the authorities. I pledge my honor that you shall be put to no expense and shall be indemnified for any financial loss you may sustain by reason of your absence."

"If I should agree these people would regard it as if I were taken by force," Laroche protested. "Your life would be the forfeit. Indeed, I am already concerned for your safety. I cannot control the Cherokees. You know what they are! You must admit that your errand here is futile!"

It was so contrary to Everard's temperament to accept defeat in any form that he could only accede metaphorically. "I'm not half blind!" he said.

Laroche pressed the point. "The effusion of blood is threatened. You must perceive it."

"The knife is at my throat," assented Everard debonairly, as if scornful of his peril.

Laroche tried him on a more vulnerable topic. "The commissioners' party would never get out of the country. But to save the lives of your brave soldiers and the civilian commissioners, who have no quarrel with any one, if you will at once draw off your force I will use what influence I have with Moy Toy to let you go scot-free through the country."

The eyes of Everard were large, but the astonished white showed all around the iris. He gasped once or twice and caught his breath,—that the man whom he had come to arrest under the authority of the British government and bear away captive should engage to see him clear of the Cherokee country!

Only after many stormy wrangles with Moy Toy, however, and the other headmen, did Laroche, secretly urging upon them the jeopardized interests of the cession and the disastrous effects of precipitancy in the imminent emprise of the united tribal armies, secure acquiescence in this

plan of permitting the expedition to depart in peace. It was, nevertheless, a perilous time. The air seemed freighted with treachery. Along the route among the Overhill towns lying on the Tennessee River, always reputed the most war-like and implacable and powerful of the Cherokee nation, through which they must needs pass to retrace their way, hardly an hour elapsed in which some inimical demonstration did not seem impending. Now the march was checked by a deputation from some more remote town desiring to send by their hand a memorial or a present to Governor Boone. Now a formidable group of savages, splendidly armed and mounted, rejoicing in the terrible suspicions of sinister designs and lurking ambuscades in force, which their presence must foster, begged to take personal and individual leave of the notables of the expedition.

Everard, in all his military experience, had never known such anxiety. He could not have watched a father's danger with more tender and self-reproachful solicitude than he felt for the elderly civilians, with their wrinkled countenances and bewigged heads wagging affably under the ceremonious ordeal of parting from these friends, who might at a wanton blow bloody the one and break the other, and account the deed righteousness and patriotism. Alas, for the point of view!

"I can never forgive myself for extending and increasing your jeopardy," Everard said to them in uncharacteristic dismay one night, as he sat with the commissioners around the camp-fire, each man with a sort of automatic motion of looking over the shoulder at intervals, to descry, perchance, in the shadows something more dangerous than the green shining of a panther's eyes or a wolf crouched ready to spring. The sound of the sentry's tramp, as unmolested he walked his beat hard by, was a reassurance that naught else could bestow. "I ought to be court-martialed, I ought to be broke, I vow and protest!"

He cared little for the military views of the polite and "lady-like old men," but the chorus of indignant negation that rose upon the suggestion was as salve to a wound. He had moved with the entire sanction of the commissioners themselves, one of them argued.

"And if the man had been that fellow Laroche or Louis Latinac, think of the repose his capture would have insured the frontier!" exclaimed the member of the council, the diplomat.

"Either one is worth a regiment to the French cause," growled the basso profundo of the geologist. "The mere chance was not to be neglected."

"We are not required to achieve the impossible. We are all held down to metes and bounds, course and distance," said the surveyor.

"And the *best* of us are subject to mistakes. Think of me," exclaimed Mr. Taviston, fitting together his waxen-white, knuckly fingers and casting an aquiline smile at Everard, on one side of the fire. "I actually sent a misdescription of a specimen to the Botanical Society, and the mistake, when discovered — so overwhelming, so important, so humiliating — I took to my bed!"

Lieutenant Everard did not in his contrition seek this refuge in recumbency, but as Mr. Taviston entered upon a long, minute, and learned account of how the error had occurred, and the exact points of difference, and all the bewigged heads leaned together to hear, to compare, to comment, to condole, Everard, on the pretext of visiting the guards, which he did himself at close intervals, quitted the group. He looked back at them once as they sat around the flare in the darkness, oblivious for the time of danger, regardless of night, impervious to cold, eager, agitated, curious, utterly absorbed; and yet the point of interest, as well as he could make out, was that Mr. Taviston had actually said by strange inadvertence *filiform* instead of *filamentose*.

"But," he commented to himself, "if a gang of Cherokees should tomahawk that party, strange as it may seem, brains would be spilt as well as blood!"

Among those denizens of the nation who took ceremonious farewell of the commissioners' expedition was gay Tam Wilson, arrayed still in white dressed deerskin with its flaring fringes, wrought with scarlet feathers, all floating to the breeze, gallantly mounted, fully armed, and with a crest of scarlet feathers on his curling light brown hair. This demonstration impressed Everard as only another intimation that Tam Wilson was naught but what he seemed, — some colonial wight who had rather idle and hunt and play among the Indians than work at a more suitable vocation at home. Callum, however, accounted it the height of insolent bravado. Albeit his conviction was not susceptible of proof, he had no doubt that this was the long-sought French emissary who fomented the discontents of the Cherokees. He was sure that trouble indeed would soon be brewing along the frontier.

Laroche had perceived at a glance that the situation was a revelation to Callum MacIlvesty, who had no thought to find Tam Wilson a French emissary. Lilius had indeed kept her promise. It was not she who had betrayed his secret, but only through his own inadvertence had the Highlander been permitted to discover it.

He read in Callum's face the proud indignation that he felt in the knowledge that for this man, this arch-deceiver, his love had been scorned, his loyal heart cast aside, — this man, who had accepted their tendance which brought him back from the verge of the grave, and who yet burned, by the hand of his myrmidons, the kindly roof that had sheltered him, — this man, who won a woman's love under a false name, a false semblance, a false nationality, a false tongue, idly, purposelessly, to beguile the tedium of convalescence, slipping cannily back to his old life again and

leaving her to pine,—this man, their old familiar Tam Wilson, the French emissary who with wily and wicked instigations spirited up the mischievous Cherokees against the British colonists.

The change in his position here, his acceptance of the customs of barbarism, his amity with the Indians, his adoption into the tribe, his assumption of the Cherokee garb, had always impressed Laroche as a military necessity, but he winced as he fancied how the grave, deliberative, listening face of Lilius would relax to scornful laughter and contemptuous pity when Callum MacIlvesty should detail to her these grotesque details in the discovery of Tam Wilson's identity with the malignant destroyer of the peace with the Indian tribes. He had never been so conscious of the tawdry savage foolery of beads and feathers and paint as when the party were all climbing a steep ascent afoot to rest the hard-traveled horses, and chance brought him near to Callum MacIlvesty. Yet it was in bravado, as he strode along with the reins of his steed thrown over his arm, that he greeted the Highlander.

“Barley! Barley!” he quoted, smiling. “A truce, lad! Be sure that you remember, when you tell Miss Lilius of how you found me here still, the same yet not the same, and of my high place in the esteem of the imperial Moy Toy, and of my suspected efforts to shake the footstool of the British throne, to tell her also that but for me you and your blundering braggadocio of a lieutenant would never have got home alive. So between us it is even—a life for a life!”

“Maister Wilson,—though that is not your name,—you may e'en find some other to bear your messages. I shall tell that young leddy naething; and but for that you do bestir yoursel' to save the lives of the commissioners, I wad strike ye on the mouth for so much as calling her name!”

Laroche winced as from a veritable blow ; then, with one of his sudden, mercurial reactions, he cried impulsively, "Tell her all, Callum ! Let her know how it stands now ! It will make it the better for you ! For myself, I never hope to see her again ! "

The Highlander doggedly trudged along the verge of the steeps, his shadow gigantic in the leafy valley below, his picturesque figure with kilt and plaid and bonnet and long firelock imposed on the varying azure of the ranges of mountains that she had so loved. He had been gazing at them all day and for many a day past with that thought in his mind, — that she had loved them !

"I sall tell her naething !" he said implacably. "If it makes it better for me that another man isna what he seemed she is no for me."

And then he closed his lips fast.

In Laroche's heart blossomed forth suddenly a deep secret joy to know that in all this time the young lovers were not reconciled. His vanity plumed itself in the thought. No transient fancy it was that he had inspired. And this proud fool ! — he could have laughed aloud to see the Highlander, solemnly stalking among his bitter memories and her "sweet mountains," resolved to hold his peace and eat out his heart because he would not deign to profit by the fact that the lady of his love had cared for a man who proved unworthy, thus liberating her preference, to be captured anew by himself, catching her heart in the rebound.

"Choose, you proud peat !" Laroche said to himself, repeating a gibe that he had often heard at Jock Lesly's fireside. And when he mounted anew he rode away right merrily.

XV

THE method in which Lieutenant Everard had compassed his retreat from the Cherokee country gave rise to much discussion in that day, especially among military and *quasi* military men. Particularly was this of interest at those remote and feeble posts at which small detachments were stationed on the verge of the Indian country and among conditions likely at any time to duplicate his dilemma. It was variously contended that he should have stood his ground even had his heart been cut out still pulsating, and *per contra* that his course was amply justified, — nay, that the obligation to save the civilian commissioners as well as the men of his command was imperative, and that it would have been criminal folly to fail to take advantage of the opportunity to make off thus with something less than the full honors of war, more especially as the expedition was not of a strictly military character.

The licensed British traders, plying their vocation among the Catawbas, Creeks, and Chickasaws, entertained the high and sanguinary view of Lieutenant Everard's duty in the premises, seeming to think that blood spilled in their interest was well spent, and to resent any precautionary measures that tended to hoard it. Whereas the officers of the little flimsy forts believed the effort to protect the mercantile monopoly of the Indian trade by the British government was not worth the sacrifice of life and the effusion of blood when it came to the hopeless odds of a thousand to some threescore.

The discomfiture of the British embassy to Great Tellico

and the inglorious return of Lieutenant Everard, failing to compass the arrest he demanded, seemed to have imparted a certain assurance to Indian prestige. A new and subtle arrogance of mind, covert and yet perceptible, distinguished the attitude of the warriors toward the British traders who had the opportunity to observe them. This did not characterize individuals only, but appertained to a generally diffused spirit among the tribes. It was peculiarly marked among the few Cherokees seen in these days beyond their own boundaries, but extended to the Muscogees and their subtribes, also the Choctaws, the Choconaws, and went even so far as to touch their inimical kindred the Chickasaws, — always hitherto friendly to the British and averse to the French. It suggested some treasured consciousness of latent strength. As a portent of the quiet biding of an ultimate time of reckoning, instances of patience and lenience on the part of Indians under provocation became more menacing than open protest or violent wrath. A subtle lurking triumph could be discerned, nevertheless, in their manner, — the proud glance, the arrogant carriage, the crafty turn of a phrase, charged with a double meaning. Especially prominent and perceptible were these *indicia* when many of various nationalities, some of the tribes now extinct, chanced to be congregated together at a trading-station such as the one beginning to be organized anew under the guns of Fort Prince George.

As yet public confidence in the restoration of peace in the Cherokee country had not been reëstablished. An outbreak seemed imminent at any moment, albeit indeterminate, vaguely in the air. Constant rumors of the machinations of French emissaries, especially the two officers Latinac and Laroche, deterred capital, always conservative, and the hideous character of Indian vengeance daunted the hardiest British trader from essaying a premature effort. Up to this time, therefore, no trading licenses had been applied for or

issued for the towns of the upper country since the burning of Jock Lesly's trading-house on the Tennessee River. In the neighborhood of Fort Prince George, however, a degree of reassurance was felt since a military defense was possible and a refuge at hand. Moreover, in case the fort itself should be besieged, as it lay on the southeastern confines of the Cherokee country, relief could be sent out from Carolina before famine would compel a capitulation. It is true that in the war just concluded the blow fell here first of all, fourteen white men being suddenly murdered within a mile of the fort. However, the advantages of trade were now peculiarly great by reason of this absence of marts in the upper region, and for a season or so the Cherokee village of Keowee, within gunshot of the fort, attracted a great concourse of Indian hunters bent on the barter of deerskins, furs, and pearls.

Jock Lesly, one of the most experienced of the early traders, had foreseen and seized this advantage, and albeit he still ostentatiously sighed for his old home on the Tennessee River and fondled his sorrow as an exile, and was wont in financial pride and vainglory to recount the value of his stock and "gude will," on the last of which he laid particular stress, being so well acquainted with the country, — to use his phrase, "wi' baith man an' beast, wi' ilka buck on twa legs or four that roamit the woods," — he had ample opportunity in the lack of competition to recoup himself for the losses that he had sustained. Moreover, he had the trade of the officers and men at the fort, for those days in no wise differed from these in the necessities suddenly developed as soon as one is out of reach of the usual sources of supply.

The trader was cheerful in these fair prospects, rosy and jocund, and in this connection said "oh fie" many times to call his daughter's attention to the fact how "fat and well-liking he was," needing none of her care, and to urge her return to the colonies.

"I'll e'en bide here," she averred firmly. "There's but the twa o' us. I maun hae my hame where ye be, for ye are gettin' auld; your pow is fu' gray!"

"Ye are a graceless bairn to say as muckle! — oh fie! — I was born wi' a tow head!" exclaimed Jock Lesly, who although flattered by her filial affection felt that she would be safer in Charlestown. "I to be ca'd gray an' auld! — when I hae ne'er been sae weel-favored, — comelier, I trow, than ony o' theae young lads at the fort, though a' dressed out in their flim-giskies."

He sometimes wondered vaguely if any of them could be the attraction that held her here, and then reflected sagely that there were more lads still in Charlestown. He had experienced a vague regret to notice — and he had often tried to recall when it had first arrested his attention — that there had been a gradual averse change in her manner toward MacIlvesty and a certain glum dourness in his reception of it.

"That's no the way to win a high-sperited lass like Liliias," he reflected impatiently. "I wonder that the callant has na mair sense. He suld be sonsy an' gay, an' mak a braw show wi' his Hieland coats an' kilts that he thinks sae fine, an' that set off sae weel his buirdly round handsome legs. Sic a spindle-shanks as that chiel Tam Wilson now wad aye be glad o' the fringed leggings."

And then he paused again. For why must he be always thinking of Tam Wilson presently when his mind was busy with the subject of the differences which he vaguely perceived had arisen between Callum and Liliias? He frowned heavily to note anew the connection of ideas. Surely, surely, the Highlander could not think that she preferred this man, — this stranger, of whom they knew naught save that his name was Tam Wilson, and that he hailed from some far-away region of Virginia.

Adventurous, experimental himself, Jock Lesly, in com-

mon with many of the empiric temperament, was the most conservative of men in his views controlling others. He had scorned and contemned a title as "fitten neither to eat nor drink," but he was exceedingly tenacious of the fact that he himself came of good honest folk, who could trace their ancestors, although of humble station,—farmers, fishers, and traders,—for many and many a generation without a reproach or blemish, and thus he had perceived no incongruity that Callum MacIlvesty with his gentle blood should become the husband of Lilias. He knew, of course, that the Highlander's inherited right to lands and lineage was in these days of attainder and forfeiture absolutely valueless, disregarded, and forgotten, but it was a secret delight to him that these immaterial honors should elevate and embellish the young soldier's attachment to Lilias and render him in her father's eyes more worthy of her. Being a widower with an only child, Jock Lesly could afford to care little for Callum's lack of fortune or prospects. As he was fond of saying to himself, "Auld Jock hinna warked for naething! — the little lassie isna sae tocherless!" and in this view he would redouble his haste to be rich in the increasing opportunities of the Indian trade. It was this belated realization of a change in the sentiments of Callum and Lilias that made Jock Lesly observe the young fellow somewhat keenly when Callum returned from the upper country with the commissioners' force and found that she had been domiciled here with her father.

It was late on a gray and misty afternoon when the expeditionary force, pushing on with added speed in the fear of being belated in such close proximity to the intermediate station in their long march to Charlestown, came at last within sight and sound of Fort Prince George,—a grateful sight, the block-houses looking stanch and burly in the angles of the four bastions, the ramparts surmounted with tall palisades, all the works trig and stout, having been put in

repair by Colonel Grant the previous year while he lay here with his army awaiting the overtures of the vanquished Cherokees for peace. The fife and drum resounded from the works ; the light glanced on the steel bayonets and scarlet uniforms of the men drawn up to welcome the commissioners with fitting ceremony, for it was but seldom that the commandant had the opportunity to greet aught but wild Indians, and he made the most of the occasion ; the little cannon, of which there were four on each bastion, thundered a salute, and the troops presented arms as the commissioners rode through the gate. The honors concluded, the escort and the soldiers of the garrison, breaking ranks, surged this way and that about the parade, interchanging the news from Charlestown for reports from the Tennessee River, and the gossip of the barracks for the details of the various chances of the march, while the officers of the fort, with evident convivial intent, took charge of the commissioners and Lieutenant Everard.

Although the barracks of Fort Prince George had accommodations for a hundred men, the garrison often fell short of the complement. Therefore it was no surprise to Everard to meet here orders, in view of the disquiet of the upper country, to leave to reinforce the garrison such men as he could spare from his command, since the commissioners were now on the border of the frontier, and the region through which they were yet to pass was more or less settled with a white population and with friendly Indian tribes, the Chickasaws and Catawbas. Everard was instructed to select for this purpose those of the soldiers who could not soon rejoin their regiments from which they had been detached for service in the Cherokee country. Into this category fell the Highland contingent, for the Forty-Second had just landed in New York, — a winter in garrison at Fort Prince George seemed a bitter contrast. Everard was reminded of Callum and his equivocal position as he was going over the roll, and

he felt a qualm of regret. It was not merely because of that partisan Damon-and-Pythias-like friendship to which young men are prone, soldiers most of all, and that this change would necessitate their parting, but that upon the lieutenant's restoration to the fitting companionship of his brother officers the man of the ranks had of course sunk back out of notice and into his proper place. Everard could not feel himself to blame, yet the incongruity pained him. Despite Callum's intrinsic equality with the best of the officers, Everard knew that it would be futile to urge upon them his own example in the exceptional circumstances, and indeed this had been fraught with much discomfort not to say danger in his instance.

Nevertheless, recollecting the episode of the Ancient Warrior's disguise and the tender solicitude which the soldier had shown for his friend's safety at so great a jeopardy of his own, risking not only death but the torture, the lieutenant felt very kindly to Callum and was minded to bestow upon him some parting gift. As he was canvassing in generous thoughts the character of this testimonial, he was beset by a sudden monition of the concomitant pride and penury of the Highlander. Everard would not wound him on either account for the world. He congratulated himself as on an escape, and as he was strolling from his quarters to the mess-hall, suddenly meeting Callum, he abruptly turned about and passed his arm fraternally through the soldier's.

"Come, Callum Bane," he said gayly. "I'm off to-morrow. Let's go to the trader's and get a keepsake. I'll give you an Indian pipe if you will give me one, and as long as the *Nicotiana Tabacum* holds out to burn we will never forget the big Injun at Chilhowee."

Callum had no sense of supersedure or resentment upon his sudden dismissal from his friend's society. He was too entirely the soldier to cavil at the obligations which the gradations of rank necessarily impose. He had himself some

sharp experience that these restrictions cannot be ignored without involving a corresponding subversion of military subordination. Therefore he was not grudging nor envious, but accepted as the natural sequence of events the fact that Everard should be happily carousing with the young officers of the garrison while he, so lately the lieutenant's chosen friend, stood guard on the ramparts in the chill midnight. Hence he cordially and smilingly assented, and the two, arm in arm, set forth together.

The weather still held lowering and gloomy. On the rampart at Fort Prince George one could scarce see through the chill mists, and beyond the bare space encircling the works, to the dense, leafless wilderness. At the verge of these woods, and looking backward, one could only make out the fort like a sketch in sepia, with its shadowy block-houses, its blurred barrack roofs sleek with sleet, its tall palisades surmounting the rampart with their pointed summits serrating the gray sky. The only note of color amidst all the dreary neutral tints was the red uniform of a squad of soldiers returning with several deer from the hunt that kept the post in fresh meat.

The trading-house was well within sight of the works and close on the river bank. The boughs of several leafless trees, white with the morning's rime, although it was now past noon, swayed above its high peaked roof; within this seemed to hold great merchandise and store of shadows, for however the light might stream in at the broad barn-like door, or the fire flare on the hearth at the further extremity, only vague outlines of struts and rafters and interdependent timbers could be seen, while from the beams below swung various goods appropriate to the time and trade, — saddles, bridles, ropes, chains, blankets, cloths of various bright tints of red and yellow, all interwoven and rich of effect. Arms glittered on the shelves and racks below, and axes, hatchets, knives, — all sending out a metallic glitter here and there

as the firelight flickered. Always about this fire stood or crouched at least half a dozen braves of various tribes, reveling in its luxury, albeit so well inured to the cold elsewhere, their presence necessitating cautious surveillance from the under-traders. For the Indians of the lower grades, it is said, considered it no derogation to steal, but infamy to be caught in stealing. A variety of articles calculated to attract the favorable regards of the officers and men at the fort were displayed, — buttons, hose, buckles, brushes, snuffboxes, ribbons, candlesticks and snuffers, mirrors, gambadoes, — even books, over the slow sale of which Jock Lesly often shook his head. "The carles at the fort are no readers." Some exquisite feather-wrought mantles, Indian baskets, hemp-woven rugs, and quaint pottery were offered. There were a number of stone pipes showing an extraordinary skill in carving, for the material, soft when quarried, hardened on exposure to the air. The Cherokees excelled all other tribes in this branch of aboriginal art, and some of their work of this date may now be seen in museums or decorating the rooms of historical societies. Before the trader's collection of pipes the two friends paused.

Jock Lesly had met Callum with no apparent diminution of their earlier cordiality when first he had returned to the fort. But it nettled the proud Highlander now to observe how obsequious was the trader's manner to Everard, taking scant notice of his "far awa' kinsman." And why indeed should he not be attentive to the officer? Jock Lesly cared naught for him but to sell him an Indian pipe, and if the one found for him did not please him to diligently persuade him that it did. "Surely, surely, sir, a bonny bauble. Here, sir, is a fearsome cur'osity if you favor the heejus in Injun carving. That, sir, — why it stays in a corner, bein' broken. An' here, sir — look at this — a braw specimen, a real bit of sculpchur." As far as Jock Lesly was concerned John Francis Everard was born and brought into this world

expressly to buy that pipe, for Jock Lesly was essentially a trader — so superior a salesman, in fact, with an eye so keenly and accurately adjusted to the main chance, that without the least ceremony he abruptly deserted them for a matter of more moment, and Callum, angered but an instant since by the adroit pressure of these small wares by a man able to care naught whether the sale was made or lost, was inconsistently irritated, affronted, when Jock Lesly's attention wavered. A couple of Indians bargaining their peltry for gear had become embroiled in rancorous words with the under-trader, who was about to lose his temper under great provocation and, what was worse in the estimation of Jock Lesly, the advantages of the trade. As he stepped swiftly to the rescue, suavely inquiring into the point at issue, the Cherokee words embellished with his Scotch accent, the two military men at the counter where the pipes were laid out, in the design of which they each sought something reminiscent of their experiences together, hesitated, at a loss, and a trifle out of countenance. Callum trembled lest by reason of this cavalier treatment aught disrespectful of auld Jock Lesly pass the lips of the officer, whom he supposed to be entirely ignorant of any concern or interest that he had in the trader's household. But Jock Lesly was amply competent to maintain his own standing, and Everard, exacting as he might be, was no man to quarrel with a trader for postponing the sale of a trifle lest he lose the bargain for a hundredweight of choice peltry.

As they idly waited the firelight flickered in their faces ; the steel of the weapons in the racks flashed in long, slender lines about the building ; the wind, wet, fragrant with the odor of bark and dead leaves, came in from the wilderness without at the open door, and set all the gloomy dusk awavering ; and suddenly, as if evolved from the necromancy of these immaterial elements, a slight shape compounded of light and shadow, of the sheen of golden hair

and a dull brown dress, a pink and white face, with dark blue eyes and eyelashes still darker, stood on the other side of the counter with a submissive "What's your wull?"

Everard stared speechless. Doubtless the girl was uncommonly pretty, but it had been full three months since he had seen a fair white brow in a woman, a blue eye, and a wealth of curling blond hair. She looked in the shadow an angel for beauty, a princess for dignity, and a nun for ascetic gravity. Yet she was only the trader's daughter, ably seconding her father, whose heart she knew must be fairly rent for failure of the opportunity to sell the pipes. "John, Duncan, Malcom," he had roared, and they came not; therefore gliding out from some hidden recess appeared Lilius.

Once more Callum trembled for the false position, for instantly the handsome Everard must needs seek to commend himself personally, and essay the language of gallantry.

"This represents, you say, an Indian queen with black locks," he said, turning over in his hand one of the pipes curiously tinted that she had offered. "I should not care for that. It seems to me that the only hair for beauty is yellow, gilded as if with refined gold."

He boldly lifted his handsome eyes to her fair tresses devoid of the concealing cap of the fashion and rolled, richly waving, high up from her forehead and held with a blue ribbon.

She did not even change color. It seemed that the image carved on the stone pipe might have smiled as readily. She only laid it aside with supreme gravity as a rejected commodity, and he was at once ill at ease, for he would have liked well to own it.

"May I ask you to choose one for me and one for my friend," he persisted in the personal note, partly to cover his confusion. Then he added, "You understand the degree of aboriginal art they represent and what is most worth while."

If he had expected to prolong the interview by reason of her vacillations in the discharge of this commission, he was mistaken. In two minutes he was furnished with an effigy of the head of a warrior crowned with a war-bonnet. Through its rudely simulated circle of feathers the smoke would curl as if merely an extension of their flamboyant glories. Callum had assigned to him a similitude of a bird, curiously wrought and with an elaborately decorated stem. Then she suddenly vanished, as if a vision of such delicate consistency could hardly withstand the freshening of the breeze. As it came in, flaring the fire and fluttering the fine show of fabrics swinging from the beams and circling about the building, it seemed as if it had extinguished the fair and dainty fancy that she must have been.

"The trader's beautiful daughter, Miss Lilius, no doubt," said Everard to Callum in a low voice, as they turned to settle for the pipes with Jock Lesly.

Although so low a voice, her father heard it.

"And I should be glad to know, sir, from whom you had her name so pat upon your tongue?" he demanded surly.

He could not have said why, but he was angered by the phrase, "the trader's beautiful daughter," although he was not expected to overhear it. With his mind averse to Callum as it had lately grown, he speculated upon the possibility that it was he who had descanted upon her beauty to this young lordling, and that Everard, perhaps, had caused himself to be brought here that he might judge for himself.

For once Callum subjected himself to no misapprehension. "I hae never mentioned her name," he said stiffly.

"No, no, indeed!" protested Everard hastily; for although he revolted at the pother over so slight a matter as he esteemed it, he wished to occasion no awkwardness to Callum, whose position seemed to bristle with unexpected difficulties. "I never heard of her from Callum—nor from any

one at the fort. She — your daughter, Miss Lilius — was mentioned to me by a Virginian whom we saw in the Overhill towns — who claimed to be well acquainted with you. His name was — Tam Wilson — was it not, Callum ? ”

“ I dinna ken his name,” said the dour Callum shortly.

“ Ou, ay — Tam Wilson — I mind Tam Wilson weel enow,” said the trader curtly, his red face now blotched with white.

He took his money for the pipes, and as the two young men trudged away in the closing mist he took himself to task. He did not know what he would be at, he said to himself. He could not expect the trader’s beautiful daughter Lilius never to be mentioned among young men — why, the girl was celebrated for her beauty wherever she went. But somehow he knew that if Callum had been seriously in love he was of that earnest, reserved nature that would have guarded her name from other lips as if it had been a sacred thing ; that her beauty would have been to him only an incident of her personality, dear because it characterized her, and never to be vaunted abroad by him.

Analyzing thus his anger, Jock Lesly discovered that he was not excited because her name was mentioned, but because he thought that it had come from Callum. This marked the measure of disappointment and discontent he experienced, to suspect that Callum’s attachment to Lilius was not of the serious nature hitherto supposed.

“ But heigh, sirs,” he said to himself, “ it’s no for the puir callant’s betterment that the lassie’s father hae aye a kind heart till him when Lilius hersel’ looks so glum an’ dour at him. I marked the glance o’ her eye whilst I was dealin’ with thae carles o’ Injuns. Lord — Lord ! ” he exclaimed in dismay, “ man is but mortal an’ fitted for mortal wark ! I canna trade wi’ the Injuns an’ yet hae the wisdom an’ leadin’ to guide the luve affairs o’ that freakish Lilius, that I’se warrant dinna ken her own mind ! I’se

e'en commit it a' to Providence, that dootless hae mair experience than this puir tradin' body, that disna even ken what will become o' the station if they still haud otters at the price they are askin' the noo!"

Having thus discharged his mind of the responsibility, although now and again he sighed heavily because of the soreness that the stress of his anxiety had left in his consciousness, he busied himself in the multitude of his duties, ever and anon returning to the haranguing of Duncan and Malcom and John, that they should have all been out of the way and left him with no one to wait on a wheen o' callants frae the fort, it requiring both himself and Dougal to drive a bargain with the discerning chief of Nequassee.

This line of thought bringing up again the recollection of Callum's offended face and wounded mien because of his ungracious and groundless suspicions, Jock Lesly grew pricked in conscience and desirous to be reconciled formally.

"Zounds!" he muttered, "I maun hae my friends, Lilias or no Lilias, an' the man is my far awa' cousin — sae far awa' it canna be counted — but that's neither here nor there. Hegh, Duncan," he called out, "ye can gae ower to the fort an' ask Callum MacIlvesty if he 'll no sup wi' me the night if he isna on duty."

It had been Callum's impression during the few days that he had now been at the fort that the trader's domicile must be one of the unoccupied cabins within the works, for he knew that during the earlier alarms of the Cherokee War certain houses had been placed at the disposal of the settlers' families flocking there for safety. In his opinion this would have been much the safest method of sheltering the trader's family, but his invitation to the domestic board at the trading-house itself was a definite negation to this supposition.

"Surely auld Jock is clean wud," he said to himself as, furnished duly with leave, he went out from the fort and

crossing the bridge of the fosse took his way over the glacis beyond the fields and those broad spaces filled with the stumps of the trees which Grant's troops had felled while the army lay in camp outside the works.

He stumbled over one of these, so dim was the light of the chilly, misty dusk. As he regained his footing he turned to look back at the fort. It was but dimly outlined against the dreary evening sky ; a steady gleam of light came from the window of the guard-house near the gate, while hovering above the works was a vague suffusion of rays that doubtless issued from various undiscriminated sources, — doors ajar, unseen windows, a lantern perchance swinging here and there, — all combining in this faint, dimly discerned aureola beneath the dense, overpowering weight of the blackness of the night. He heard the sentinel challenge the officer of the day on his rounds and then the measured tramp as the guard turned out. The lonely wind was sighing among the sad, rifled woods ; the river's dash over the rocks that fretted its currents came distinct to his ears ; and just as he was thinking that without more guidance in the darkening gloom he might walk off its steep bluffs he perceived suddenly a light in front of him and heard the opening of a door. He was already at the trading-house, and here was Jock Lesly coming out to speculate on his delay, but seeing him at hand, he pretermitted this to reprove his tardiness.

“ Hout, man ! ye 'll get no sic vivers at the fort as I sall set before ye ! My certie, when I was your age the board ne'er waited for my teeth to be sharpened.”

There was, however, no convivial board spread in the trading-house, where Callum now expected to see it. While he waited for Jock Lesly to rearrange a barricade at the door which could not be removed from without except with great clamor, he noted instead that the fire had died down almost to embers. Only now and again a feeble white flare, start-

ing up from a mass of red coals, showed the proportions and usage of the trading-house, and set up such a flicker among the glancing arms and swaying fabrics as gave an uncomfortable suggestion of half seen figures lurking and ready to spring.

"Hegh, callant," cried Jock Lesly's voice with a tremor of relish and triumph in the disclosure he meditated. "Come along, and we 'se see what we 'se see!"

Lighting a lantern he pulled aside a secret door in the counter, and as he crept into the box-like place, Callum MacIlvesty heard the sound of another door opening in the flooring. The swaying light in the hand of the host began to slowly descend, and the young Highlander, following closely, bidden to slam the door of the counter behind him, found with his feet the rungs of a ladder but dimly discerned as the lantern swung. Presently, however, there was scant need of this humble illumination. A gush of red light from below revealed the long extent of the ladder, a stone floor at the bottom, the walls of a grotto of impenetrable unbroken rock, and naught besides. A projection of the rugged wall like a buttress shielded the apartment from view, while they themselves were fully visible throughout their descent. Jock Lesly barely gave the young fellow time to leap down without touching the last half dozen rungs, and lowered the ladder swiftly by means of a rope and pulley; the door which it had held open shut quickly, and if a man should seek to lift it or to descend thence, he could be picked off by a rifle from below before he could gain a glimpse of the place beneath or the group in the chamber beyond. If an intrusive foot should be placed on the ladder when in position, a mere touch from below would dislodge that structure, and the invader, falling from the great height, pay for his temerity with his life.

This was a device put into practice by those constrained to dwell among the inimical Indians in Tennessee, both be-

fore and afterward, but to Callum it was an undreamed-of expedient, and he must needs pause to admire the completeness of its features before Jock Lesly, pointing them out in detail, would permit him to turn to survey the subterranean home.

"The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rock," the trader quoted.

A lofty but narrow chamber had its elements of comfort. Hickory logs were flaring in a great fireplace, and remembering the plan of the building above Callum realized that the flue connected with the chimney of the trading-house, and thus no smoke or light betrayed the cavern to the Indians or, if it were already known to them, this usage of it. The walls, roof, and floor, of rock of unimaginable thickness, were without a break, save that on the side next the river, in a passage like an anteroom, was a series of apertures high among the shadows and round like portholes, affording ample ventilation, — a curiosity that occurs here and there among the bluffs of this region, relics of some forgotten cataclysmal period when the outbursting waters sculptured the rocks. Beyond another arch or tunnel seemed a more limited chamber adjoining the main grotto, whence a golden glow of lamplight betokened occupation, and a wooden partition and door added to its seclusion. "A cubby hole yon where Lilius sleeps an' keeps her bit duds, an' rins awa' to sulk, an' here on this end is a passage where the gillies foregather an' aye always is on watch to guard the door. An' this big room is the parlor, an' we sit here to receive our company like gentles. Hegh, callant, if we had only had sic a ha' house on the sweet Tennessee River!"

Before the fire now Lilius sat as if she were indeed in some safely guarded and softly lined parlor. She was arrayed in a brilliant yet dainty gown of striped sarsenet, blue and white, with pink roses scattered at intervals down the white stripe. Her shining golden hair was rolled high

from her forehead and a long thick curl hung to her shoulder at one side. An embroidered cape of sheer cambric made visible the white neck that it affected to shield. Her feet were cased in high-heeled red slippers, over one of which the old collie had put a restraining paw, that she might not move without his knowledge, as he lay on the rug beside her spinning wheel. She was now busy with this little flax wheel, while the supper was cooking under the ministrations of an elderly wrinkled Scotch dame, the mother of one of the gillies, who officiated in the household in many capacities, — cook, laundress, dairywoman, — and not the least valued by Jock Lesly as his adviser how to manage the fractious Lilius, whose nurse she had been.

“Gude guide us!” she would exclaim. “Maun ye always be harryin’ the bairn’s life out? Let her alone! Let her alone! or else since ye are sae cruel jus’ tak your big fist an’ knock her harns out at ance!”

Thus berated Jock Lesly would feel that he was indeed a disciplinarian and must needs moderate his severities, or Luckie Meg, as she was called, would be telling at the fort and elsewhere how he tyrannized over his household.

Here Lilius, in the unbounded wisdom of eighteen years, had elected to set up her staff, and hither had she transported the bulk of her effects. She ordered her life much as she would if yet in Charlestown, and seemed incongruously content. If the sight of her in her plain dark brown serge had been overwhelming to Everard, what would be the effect of this vision of dainty loveliness Callum wondered.

Very serious she was when she sat at the table, with a sort of absolute impervious dignity that was not even impaired when the collie stood up on his hindlegs beside her chair with his forepaws on the cloth, looking about him with eager curiosity, and betraying like an ill-bred child that there were more elaborate “vivers” for this occasion than he was in the habit of seeing. Callum could hear the

rushing of the river so close outside that he thought their cavern of refuge must be lower than the surface of the water. The flames flared and roared up the chimney ; the young packmen or gillies laughed and talked with muttered gibes and boyish sniggers and chuckles in their anteroom ; the shadows flickered over the lofty vault ; Jock Lesly was once more his old genial self, and Callum felt that the fort was so far away that it was garrisoned in another existence, that the Indians were extinct, that sorrow and pain and loss were but the untoward incidents of an old dream called life, and that he had entered into Paradise, — a bit doubtful, a bit tremulous, a bit prayerful, and very humble, for Lilius, though quite casual, though only carelessly kind, had smiled at him !

“ Tam Wilson, now,” said Jock Lesly.

And all at once this grim old world of troubles and fears, of grief and gloom, had whisked back again.

“ Now that chiel, Tam Wilson ! ” reiterated Jock Lesly.

He was amazingly comfortable, the trader, still sitting at the table thrown back in a seat, cleverly constructed to imitate a cushioned armchair, drinking Scotch whiskey till the smell of the peat of the still fires seemed to fill the room, and then a fine French brandy that but inflamed his patriotism and insular prejudice. “ What’s that callant doing all this long time in the Cherokee country ? ”

Callum glanced down at the firelight flashing through his own glass, now like a ruby and now like a topaz. He dared not meet the eyes of Lilius. But when he looked up at last, as he needs must at a repetition of the question, she was busied with a comfit.

“ I hae my ain thoughts,” he said.

Jock Lesly was beginning to nod. It had been a long hard day, and now warmth and comfort and “ vivers ” and brandy were telling on his powers of discrimination.

“ Seems strange ! Remember Callum,” he said suddenly,

“how afeared o’ Moy Toy the callant was!” He laughed sleepily. “He fairly pined to get us out o’ reach o’”— He paused, nodding.

Once more Callum glanced furtively at Lilias. She sat idly toying with her spoon in the red glow, her blue and white apparel, her golden head, her glimmering neck and shoulders, half revealed by their sheer broideries, all indescribably dainty, fairy-like of effect amid these rude surroundings. Her soft and delicate countenance was calm, inexpressive, inscrutable.

“Hegh, Callum,” said Jock Lesly, seizing the subject again in a waking interval, “that captain-lieutenant—what’s his name? Everard? Aye, Everard! A-weel, Everard was saying that chiel was bein’ passed off on him for a Frenchy. Hegh! my certie! Tam Wilson a Frenchy — Johnny Crapaud”—

His head fell more definitely forward—he was gone at last; the low luxurious susurrus of his breath, almost a snore, filled the room at regular intervals.

Afterward Callum could not appraise the impulse, the instinct, that animated him. The room had dulled to a deep crimson glow; in the waning light of the fire the gray walls of the cave showed without shadows, for the light was not so strong as to duplicate an image. Luckie Meg slept on her stool by the hearth, the collie snored under the table, the gillies were silent in the antechamber; the only suggestion of the world outside was the sound of the river rushing on like life to its ultimate destination, to be lost in the tides of the sea like eternity. In the red gloom Callum was hardly aware if her face were yet so distinct, or because in his memory never a shadow could rest upon it.

He gazed directly into her eyes and beheld them dilate expectantly.

“*You* knew that he was French, Lilias. *You* knew it all the time!”

She replied as to an accusation. "No — not all the time — *no* — Callum!"

"And you knew how I loved you — so long — so true — never one else — never another thought! And to cast me aside for him — for *him*! A spy, an emissary, sent to spirit up the Indians against the frontier — for the hideous massacres of women and children."

"He declared it was not for that. He said his government only sought to utilize the Indians in the same way that the English hae used them in our armies, as soldiers. He only obeyed his orders, as you do yours — being a soldier, forby an officer."

"An officer! O Lilias, war is one thing and this is another!"

"I think like you, Callum; though after I heard him tell his plan it didna seem the same; that is — forby" — Lilias hesitated, sore beset — "I could see how it all had a different face to him. An' he was na cruel to us — he keepit the Injuns aff us."

"Because the French plans were not ripe enough for our murder then — and Lilias, you knew it! And let your father warm this serpent by his hearth — in his bosom!"

"I didna ken it at first. No, Callum," exclaimed Lilias, eager in self-defense, her own fealty to the hamely ingle-neuk in question. "No, and not till the last," she protested, her voice trembling as she remembered that he had offered to renounce king and country, duty and honor for her. This was not Tam Wilson, however. Tam Wilson would never have done this. And it was Tam Wilson who had been so dear!

"He told me at the last! — the last day but twa or three! — or else I couldna hae abided him!"

Callum, fingering his glass, looked off drearily into the glowing mass of red coals. He was recalling the details of that memorable journey, — those days when she declared

that she had had dreams. Dreams, dear indeed, since their tenuity warranted the bitter realities of those hot despairing tears. Dreams, alas, which could not come true! Callum doubted if his persistence had won for him much of value,—the certainty that she had wept for Tam Wilson, because he was not — Tam Wilson !

Jock Lesly was beginning to stir. He snorted, yawned, stretched his arms, then sat up straight and opened his eyes. The walls of the cavern first caught his attention. “Hegh, Callum lad, this is like thae auld days fowk are sae fond o’ talkin’ about, the Fifteen an’ the Forty-five, when the attainted Jacobites hid about in caves an’ hollows, an’ limekilns an’ cellars. Remind ye o’ it ? ”

Callum slowly appraised the glowing dream-light, the luxurious warmth, the comfortable “vivers,” the half emptied decanters, and thought of the ditch in the moorland and the crevice in the mountain, the cold and the starvation, the loss of fortune and favor, the end in exile or on the scaffold. No—he could not just say that he was reminded of it.

And as Jock Lesly was about to demonstrate the points of similarity in the situation a sudden iterative throbbing shook the earth, and the Highlander sprang to his feet, recognizing the vibrations of the drum beating the tattoo, and saying that he would have a run for it to reach the fort, the barracks, and bed by taps.

XVI

THE detachment of Highlanders that Lieutenant Everard left to reinforce Fort Prince George proved of no great interest to the troops already stationed there pining in the weariness of long inaction. The natural expectation of the revival of zest in life incident to new companionship, fresh experiences, stories still untold, and songs as yet unsung all fell flat in the reality ; for few of the newcomers could speak aught but the Gaelic, and they clung together with a pertinacity and a suspiciousness of the “Sassenach sidier,” with whom they were thus unequally yoked, that threatened faction in the little garrison. Hence, to accustom them to their new comrades and break up the clique whenever it was possible, the Highlanders were separately detailed to duty among the English, although on parade, at roll call, and at drill they were segregated and kept within their own ranks.

Callum MacIlvesty was one of the few who could speak English ; but although, being a “gentleman ranker,” his lowly station involved association with his military equals, he seemed hardly likely to contribute notably to the mirth of nations. He was preoccupied, gravely brooding much of the time, and even when roused showed a temperament averse to the familiar horseplay of the jocund Britisher. Among his Scotch comrades he was little subject to the irksome constraints of his position as a common soldier. They could gauge and realize his claims to a higher station, and, more than conceding them, showed him a consideration and respect to which he had been accustomed from his earliest youth. He returned their kindness, which thus mani-

fested a touch of the magnanimous, with earnest fellow feeling, and his relations with them were affectionate and even fraternal. To the English contingent at the fort, however, he was merely "a bare-kneed Sawney who held his head stiff and stepped high," with no justification that they could discriminate, for he, like them, shouldered a musket for pay.

Even in this humble station it seemed to him that fortune was singularly adverse, and that his enforced absence from his regiment had cost him the signal opportunity of his life to achieve distinction or aught of value. Recovering from a wound, but yet unfit for duty, he had been granted a furlough early in the year, which he had spent at Jock Lesly's trading-house, and afterward, at the moment of eager expectation of sailing to join the Forty-Second in the West Indies, he had been ordered with the small detachment of Highlanders in Charlestown to reinforce the commissioners' escort because of previous familiarity with the Cherokee country. While he was engaged in this distasteful pacific duty, Moro Castle had been carried by storm and the city of Havanna had capitulated, and the Forty-Second, returning to America, was flushed with victory and elated with glory. There was to be no more fighting, it seemed, and in this tame inaction the winter at Fort Prince George was but a dreary prospect.

The inglorious return of the commissioners' force from the Cherokee country, and the futile arrest which Everard had attempted, were matters of great moment to the garrison, lying as it did within the borders of the Cherokee possessions; but since the event had been all bloodless, the defeat had been esteemed something of a farce. The English soldiers of the escort, who could understand the fun poked at them, one of the essential constituents of mirthful ridicule, had been mercilessly guyed before their departure for Charlestown; and one memorable night the subject

came up anew in the guard-room, when, in pursuance of the plan of detailing the Highlanders to duty separately among the English, Callum chanced to be one of the main-guard.

The firelight from the great stone chimney place flashed on the whitewashed walls and with a metallic glitter was reflected from the stack of arms, in the centre of the punch-eon floor, ready for instant use, although the cry "Guard, turn out!" seemed many hours distant down the watches of the night, unless indeed some unforeseen chance should betide. There were several bunks against the wall, which were somewhat superfluous at this hour, for at night the guard were not permitted to seek repose thereon, although not a vigilant eye should be closed. A large door led without to the parade, and a smaller one gave upon an inner apartment which bore the huge lock common to that day and a curiosity in this. The key was evidently turned upon some wight who had found liberty joyous while it lasted, and who now and again sent forth drunken snatches of song, occasionally varied with vociferous affectations of woe, weeping and sniffling and groaning by merry turns, till a freshened joyous impulse would set the catch trolling once more.

The group about the guard-room fire took slight note of these aberrations from the regulation deportment appropriate to the rôle of melancholy prisoner. They were all used to these frequent incarcerations of their jolly comrade, and realized that the rigor of his punishment would befall him when he should be sober enough to profit by it.

A heavy rain beating tumultuously against the walls and splashing from the eaves added zest to the luxury of the great blazing logs and the talk of the group ranged around on the broad hearth of flagstones.

"An' d' ye mean to say, Callum," began a leathern-visaged, weather-beaten soldier, the corporal of the guard, leaning

his elbows on his knees as he sat on a great billet of wood, "that as soon as old Moy Toy sneezed three times your Lieutenant Everard give the word '*Double-quick while ye can! For'ard, by the rear!*' and the whole command faced right about and footed it out of the Cherokee country?"

He winked jovially at the others as the big Highlander, half reclining on the floor at one side of the hearth, turned his head slowly and came gradually to a realization of his surroundings.

"I said naething o' the sort, an' ye ken it full weel," Callum replied gruffly.

"That's not the way to answer your s'perior officer," the jolly corporal admonished him, with a leer.

"Ye never asked no sic a fule question as my superior officer," Callum deigned to respond after a pause. "Ask me now if my firelock is clean an' my cartouch box is ready, an' I'se gie ye a ceevil answer; but my superior officer hae naught to do wi' Moy Toy's sneeshin'!"

"There!" exclaimed the corporal with the affectation of delighted triumph and discovery. "He have said it! He said that Moy Toy sneezed and fairly frightened Lieutenant Everard out of the Cherokee country!"

A roar of laughter rewarded this pleasantry, and hearing the gay sound, the incarcerated soldier struck up with rather a dreary quaver, "'I'll ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross!'"

"You will ride a wooden horse as soon as you are sober enough to mount one!" called out the corporal.

A great whining and wheezing and affectations of lamentation ensued on the other side of the door, at which all the guard laughed uproariously.

One of the English contingent, a short, stocky fellow, who had been carefully greasing a pair of feet always kept in the prime order for marching essential to the regular infantry-man, now presented those members glistening and

perfect on the edge of the hearth, that the unguents might take full effect by aid of the heat of the fire. He had just been admonished by the corporal of that regulation which forbids the guard to lay aside any of their clothing or accoutrements. He first argued that stockings were neither arms nor garments, then pleaded with the corporal for a momentary respite that the grease might soak into the flesh instead of the fabric of his hose. To take full advantage of the official clemency he sought to create a diversion by resuming with animation the previous subject.

"I wonder," he said, "if that furriner up there in the Cherokee country is French or a Spaniard. When I was stationed at Gibraltar I learned a deal o' the lingo of that country."

A long silence ensued. No surprise was intimated at the extent of the soldier's service, for so often had he recounted the details of his experiences at Gibraltar and the observations he had collated from Spain that they had grown a burden and had earned for him the sobriquet of "the *Señor*,"—appropriately, perhaps, mispronounced "the Sinner."

The recent hostilities between England and Spain gave additional and phenomenal interest to his prelections now.

"The Spaniards are a great people for all that's come an' gone," he resumed presently. "'T was them strengthened the fortifications at Gibraltar so they are now what they be," he added significantly.

"They did so! An' they done it well, begorra!" retorted a big Irishman. "An'," with a rollicking laugh from his full red lips, "bedad, by the same token we tuk it away from 'um."

"The Sinner" took no notice of this pertinent corollary of his proposition. He was looking reflectively at his feet, stretched out straight before him as he sat flat on the hearth. His hair stood up straight from his brow and was tied in a

thin queue behind. He had small bright eyes, heavy-lidded and downcast now. His face was clear and youthful, with a large jowl, that narrowed toward the mouth, and a short blunt nose. He was a good soldier by line and rule, and of a particularly clean aspect. In fact he had so fresh, scraped, washed an appearance that with his porcine resemblance he suggested, as he sat with his plump pink and white feet and shins bare of hose to the knee, some punctual pig that had accommodatingly cleaned and scalded himself — if such a process were ever possible in the lifetime of swine.

The flames flared furiously up the chimney. Outside the roar of water that intimated the swift flow of the Keowee River could be differentiated from the sound of the rain in a fusillade on the roof and its splashing sweep from the eaves. A roll of thunder far away shook the earth, unseasonable, seemingly irrelevant to the occasion, hardly appurtenant to this steady torrent of wintry rain.

"If that furriner is one of them Dons," said "the Sinner," resuming his speculations, his eyes critically on the contour of his great toe, "he knows what's what. He ain't there among them Injuns for nothin'. They are the strategists — them Spaniards."

"Arrah," exclaimed the Irishman, blowing out his contempt with a cloud of strong tobacco as he smoked his little cutty pipe, "it is just as well, thin, that they have got nothin' I want. Cubia will contint me — that is, for the presint," he added, with a bland air of moderation.

For this was before the treaty restoring "the Havannah" to Spain.

"I'm talkin' about the hold they are takin' on this country," argued "the Sinner." "They are surrounding us" — an apprehension at that time entertained by wiser men than he — "amongst all these wildernesses an' with no defenses but two or three flimsy mud forts. They will retaliate for the Havannah an' Manilla on the frontier of

the British colonies in Ameriky. *Diablo!* I tell you now, if that man in the Cherokee country is one o' them caballeros, what between the Spaniard an' the French an' the Injuns the southern colonies is crushed."

He brought his two shining feet together with a clap, the smart impact denoting the small chance that aught intervening would have of escape.

The other men looked reflectively at the fire. They were as brave as soldiers need to be, but the conditions of the frontier were of various adverse interpretations. While they could march against an open enemy readily enough, the chances of traps and massacres, of torture and slavery in captivity, supplemented by the wiles of a civilized power coalescing with the savages, and the ever recurrent doubt of the ability of distant superior officers to cope with these untoward circumstances so far removed from their observation, all combined to give the soldiery many a more serious thought than appertained to their humble functions as the hands that execute rather than the brain that devises.

The corporal eyed "the Sinner" rancorously.

"Ye must be gittin' them feet ready to gallopade up an' down on extra drill," he said. "I'll report you for spreading discontent among the troops with your tomfool talk about them Dons."

"Why," said "the Sinner," with a look of innocent surprise, "I was just thinkin' about all this talk o' silk wums in Carolina an' Georgia — when in Spain — why you ought jus' to see the wum farms amongst the mulberries on the" —

"No — no — ye were talkin' about that fellow up in the Cherokee country!" persisted the corporal.

"Oh, yes," admitted the wily "Sinner," perceiving the evasion was useless. "I was wonderin' if the lad was a Spaniard to be stirrin' up such a commotion. There's a deal too many o' them on the continent now to make it surprisin' if he is one too!"

"I'll tell ye, thin, me bye! 't is Oirish he is," declared the Hibernian genially. "One o' me own pattern. When-
ever ye meet a distinguished compatriot an' don't know wher he comes from, set him down for an' Oirishman, bein'
a man o' ganious!"

"He is a Scotchman I'll wager," said a native South Carolinian, for already the leaven of disaffection against that nationality that had helped to make the province strong and thrifty was beginning to work. "A Scotchman, and not just one too many, either. A Scotch trader, I'll be bound, turned Cherokee. Some o' the French get regularly adopted into the tribes. I know some Scotch fellows among the Chickasaws that are trying it, to trade the more handily, and I dare be sworn that this makebate among the Cherokees is another Injun Sawney!"

This stirred Callum's patriotism, the master key of a Scotchman's heart.

"The man's a Frenchman," he said curtly.

"Did he sneeze in French?" demanded the jocose corporal.

Callum did not laugh. His eyes were fixed on the masses of red coals beneath the flames of the fire that cast their continual flicker over his dreamy retrospective face.

"I wad hae thought mysel' he had been an Englishman, that is, a Firginian," he said reflectively, as if speaking to himself. "But no, the man is French!"

The corporal scarce drew a breath. "Hey, Callum lad," he contrived to say with a casual intonation, "had ye ever seen him afore that day?"

"Ou, ay, many a time," replied Callum, intent on his memories.

"Where, lad? where?"

Callum roused himself in returning consciousness.

"In the Cherokee country, man! At Ioco Town, at Jock Lesly's trading-house. We a' took him for a Firginian."

"And why do you think now he is French? Lieutenant Everard gave that p'int up, they tell me."

Callum hesitated. "I hae my ain reasons," he said, but with such finality of tone that the corporal pressed the matter no further.

When the guard was relieved the next morning, the officer of the day found a point of importance noted in the written report of the officer of the guard, and as a consequence Callum was surprised by a summons to the presence of the commandant of the fort, to reply to a very queer and childish question, as it seemed to him.

"How do you know that that man in the Cherokee country whom Lieutenant Everard was — about to arrest" — Captain Howard put it as euphemistically as possible, out of respect to a brother officer — "how do you know that he is French?"

"I heard him speak French, sir, to himself — when he thought he was alone."

"But you know that an Englishman, any one who can learn the language, can speak French."

"Not like a Frenchman, sir," persisted Callum.

Captain Howard hesitated. Of all things he would like to secure this makebate, this formidable influence among the Cherokees, nay among all the tribes, that had rendered the costly peace which had been so difficult to secure, so long sought, but a hollow semblance, a menacing sham. Moreover, he would be very glad to succeed where Everard had failed. A very close clutch on distinction had the dapper young lieutenant let slip. And here was the man who in the first instance had afforded information.

"Have you no other reason for your belief?" Captain Howard asked anxiously.

"Aye, sir, I ken he is French frae himsel'," Callum replied calmly. "He tauld a woman, sir, an' she tauld me; but you will no ask me to mention her name."

"Certainly not," said the officer, thinking that he wished to avoid implicating others in responsibility; "a noncombatant in any event. But," eagerly, "would you know the fellow if you should see him again?"

"I wad, sir."

"In any disguise?" the officer persisted.

"I wad indeed, sir, fu' weel."

"That is all for the present," said Captain Howard. Calum gave him an amazed stare, then saluted and withdrew, wondering at this puerile futility. Would he know the man indeed!

XVII

WITH all its advantages civilization bears also its disadvantages to the postulant of culture. Perhaps no one has adequately appreciated the stress of that period to the mental and moral nature of the Indian when, detached from his *ancien régime*, its methods and manners, growing scornful of its sanctities and questioning its values, he was yet unaccustomed to the new order of things, unversed in its utilities, incompetent of its comprehension — alienated from the one and not acclimated to the other.

Many an Indian roamed about the little mart, beginning to gather under the guns of Fort Prince George, alike surly with contempt for the old and aversion for the new, unsettled, dissatisfied, dull, and dangerous. Now and again, with a dark, restless eye, one would pause and look out unallured to the forest and river — not the same, never again to be the same! Then he would turn his gaze, with loathing disgust, to the busy mercantile Europeans, with their quick trading talk, their bearded faces, their knee breeches, and the long woolen stockings on their stout, thick calves. A queer and odious presentment of humanity they seemed. Even the military did not impress the Indians as the soldiers whirled and ranged about to the sound of fife and drum in that close order so favorable to being mowed down by the very musket and ball with which they themselves were armed. A strange mental atmosphere it was — charged with the fumes from the embers of the burned-out past and the miasma exhaled from the poisonous present. No wonder their outlook was beclouded and drear.

All the conditions of life hitherto were reversed for many of them. Never had they met the representatives of certain tribes, immemorial enemies, save with weapons in their hands. Now, because of the intrusion of the white man and the diversion of interest that he had effected, a hollow peace or a simulated indifference had been patched up. Between many the semblance was fast growing into reality under the influence of that secret hope, nay, that earnest, triumphant, almost holy expectation of national independence that had been held in abeyance of late and which the colonists perceived without interpreting. It made for a universal friendship among them, and the traders chafed at its result, for intertribal war sold gunpowder, utilized the venomous activities of the savages against each other, and thus gave immunity to the white settlers. This almost visible bond in the unity of friendship of these hereditary enemies was a menace to all the English colonies from the mountains to the Atlantic, outnumbered by their negro slaves, and with the threatening Spaniard on the south and the inimical French on the west. The frontier traders scanned the horizon that showed so strange a portent, and muttered much together and shook their heads.

To Mingo Push-koosh this prospect of universal brotherhood among the tribes promised little. He wandered drearily about the world, a vagrant indeed, almost an outcast. There had been much ill blood between the Cherokees and Choctaws on his account, although no definite national war was inaugurated, since the French influence had been exerted to maintain intertribal peace and secure satisfaction. However, sundry individual reprisals for the iniquities that celebrated the *congé* of Mingo Push-koosh at Great Tellico had resulted in counter-reprisals till, when two braves of the respective factions chanced to meet in the settlement about Fort Prince George, nervous people instinctively dodged in expectation of the smartly sped arrow or the impulsively

hurled tomahawk, and prudent people sought the nearest shelter. Indeed Mingo Push-koosh would not have ventured here within the borders of the Cherokee country but for the protection of the guns of the British fort. He was not safe inside the French boundaries, his wonted sphere, for he had been bereft of all the honors and privileges he had once enjoyed. In fact he had been sought with a view to condign punishment, a price being placed on his head when the authorities at New Orleans had learned of his betrayal of trust and desertion of Laroche, leaving him after the massacre in the hands of the Cherokees, which must have proved fatal to him and the interests he represented but for his own perseverance and address.

An exile thus, Mingo Push-koosh affected the English settlements, an avowed deserter to the British interest, protesting that his eyes were opened to the French wiles and that the French spoke with the tongue of a snake *seente soolish*, the mere sound of which made his heart weigh very heavy within him. These statements were received with a certain indifference, for by reason of his exile he could not bring any great personal following to the English flag; in fact, but for the hope that his presence might decoy others of his tribe to imitate his example, Mingo Push-koosh¹¹ would scarcely have been regarded at all. Proud and ambitious, he realized the necessity of pressing more efficaciously his own cause, and would have embraced the opportunity of any military service — but how? and whither?

Poor Push-koosh! Disregarded by the English, and in actual danger from the French, the pompous Prince Baby had now naught in hand of more import than the mercantile venture of selling a dozen or so fine horses, which he had caused to be driven from his old home at Yowanne, through the southern country, to Jock Lesly, who desired them for use in his pack-trains to Charlestown in the spring, laden with the skins from this winter's hunt. The sale

accomplished to-day, Mingo Push-koosh strolled about, forlorn, friendless, among the boxes and bales on the platform of Jock Lesly's trading-house at Keowee Town. His thick long hair floated in the breeze; his silver arm-plates and headband were as bright as of yore, but a deep dejection showed in his large surly eyes, and he had the effect of a drooping crest, albeit the flamingo feathers still flaunted high.

“*Ish la chu, angona?*” (Are you come, friend?) A Chickasaw who passed offered the conventional salutation, knowing of the Choctaw's defection from the French interest, for the subtribes (including the Choctaw) of the ancient Chicimecas have almost a common language.

“*Arahre-O angona!*” (I am come indeed, friend!) Push-koosh replied, although he could hardly refrain from springing upon the Chickasaw as he passed and tearing the scalp from his head with his teeth, if need were.

The incident concluded, he continued to idle about the trading-house, standing on the platform and gazing at the gray river under a gray sky. The water was dark—all the light in the landscape seemed concentrated in the icy flicker in the leafless forests near the Indian town of Keowee which lay on both banks. Then he shifted his position and stood on the other end of the platform and gazed silently at the bastions of the fort. Whenever he saw the British flag he could not refrain from spitting his disdain openly, obviously, on the ground. Fearing lest this demonstration be observed, as the flag flaunted from the fort, he once more turned impatiently and changed his position to the other end of the platform, as before. He was absorbed in the reflection that the great coalition of Indian tribes would at last become a triumphant fact and that he would have no share in it. This fair prospect he had forfeited, with the favor of the French; as for the English, they would have none of him, would trust him with no opportunity of value.

So long he stood there that the under-trader grew a trifle solicitous as to his designs. The degenerate among the Indians had become most expert thieves, and it is recorded that while engaged in conversation with the merchant they could abstract what articles they would from under his eyes. Alas, poor Push-koosh — whose thoughts were of empire !

Dougal Micklin, the under-trader, a pursy, unimaginative man, all of whose mental processes could be discerned in his round face and his merry dark eyes, with his round, burly body encased in buckskins and wearing a coonskin cap set rather far back from his placid brow, was loath to take his eyes from the Choctaw, visible through the wide barnlike door, and therefore mentioned his identity to Captain Howard, the commandant of the fort, who chanced to be in the house purchasing some buttons for his own personal use.

“Aye, sir, three and sax the dozen, sir,” Dougal Micklin said, as he glanced again out of the door ; then, as if to excuse his evidently wandering attention, he continued, “That Choctaw buck is an unco gret prince, Captain,” his red lips curling with good-natured sarcasm at the idea. “He used to be in high favor wi’ the French, but he fell out wi’ the mounseers at Tellico Gret, and now seems to have his finger in his mouth.”

Captain Howard turned suddenly and surveyed the figure of the Indian, as Push-koosh, unconscious of this keen scrutiny, stood sullen and dreary on the platform. The fringes of his saffron-hued buckskin shirt and leggings were all borne backward in the breeze, his stiff scarlet flamingo feathers and his long black hair were aslant also without other stir, as if he might have been pictured thus on a canvas. His heavily embroidered belt, shot pouch, and tobacco bag, his silver headband and bracelets, his necklace of pearls and many strings of “roanoke,” the fine silver-mounted pistols at his side, all seemed to confirm the truth of the trader’s representations as to his high rank.

“ ‘T is Mingo Push-koosh ! ” the trader added.

“ Call him in,” said Captain Howard. Then with an afterthought, “ No, I ’ll speak to him myself ! ”

The officer striding out confronted the Choctaw just as again, catching a glimpse of the British flag, Mingo Push-koosh was about to spit his disaffection upon the ground.

“ How ? ” said Captain Howard, smiling agreeably.

Push-koosh was visibly surprised, but looked inconceivably haughty.

“ How ? ” he returned with half covert, scornful disapprobation, and waited in doubt.

Now Captain Howard’s education was lamentably defective as far as the Choctaw, practically the Chickasaw language was concerned, although the latter Indians were those with whom he had had most dealings, as they had repeatedly served in the campaigns in this region with the British troops. Nevertheless, in the delicate and tentative bit of business which he had in contemplation, he did not desire the offices of an interpreter lest a bird of the air carry the matter.

Lending himself to the effort to compass speech as it were without words, he smiled again blandly with a distinctly mol-lifying effect.

“ Big Mingo ! ” he said, waving his hand with a free gesture to impart added grace to his compliment.

He was a tall, bony, angular man of forty-five, and the demonstration ill suited the stiff military dignity of his habitual carriage and the impressive effect of his scarlet uniform.

“ *Capteny Humma Echeto !* ” (Great red captain !) responded the Mingo, complimentary in turn.

Then they both paused and stared hard at each other.

“ Mingo love British ? ” demanded the captain at length.

Nothing could have been more sardonic than the languishing smile with which Push-koosh laid his hand upon his true heart.

"Mingo hate French?" the political catechism proceeded.

The face of Push-koosh suddenly darkened. He spat his contempt on the ground.

"*Hottuk ookproose!*" (The accursed people!)

"Why hate French?" the inquisitor proceeded.

The heart of Push-koosh swelled. His eyes burned hot in their sockets. The veins of his throat were distended and tense as cords. He could hardly speak even fragmentarily, and but for the straining of every sense to hear, to distinguish, to interpret, Captain Howard might have made but little of the jargon of broken English that the Choctaw hissed out in the intervals between his gasps of rage.

The ugly French "beloved man" had betrayed him, had ruined his prospects! He had slandered him to the headmen of Great Tellico! And because he had quitted the Cherokee country on account of their ill usage, and left the French ugly "beloved man" there,— who had sustained no harm whatever! — the indescribably ugly French governor in New Orleans was angry.

Captain Howard had caught so eagerly at the words "Great Tellico" that although his ears were not of such a conformation and flexibility that they could be described as "pricked up," his countenance had that vivid accession of intelligence that seems concomitant.

"Mingo go Tellico?"

Push-koosh's face, gradually brightening in the expectation of a commission of some important sort, fell suddenly. He remembered that fierce onset upon the unoffending Cherokee tribesmen, that bloody massacre! No, not to Tellico, as he valued his life! Never again to Tellico, never again!

"Capteny much wants Mingo go Tellico!" urged Captain Howard persuasively.

The passionate mobile countenance of Push-koosh, with

naught firm in its lines save the determination to go no more to Tellico, was turned toward the river, the wind blowing backward his long loose hair, so odd of effect here among the Cherokees, whose heads were all polled, his great eyes absent and anxious, his earnest hope of employment in the British interest slipping beyond his reach. But not to Tellico — never again !

“ Capteny much wants French ‘beloved man’ ! ” Captain Howard murmured plaintively.

Push-koosh brought his small even teeth together with so sudden a snap and gasp that the officer instinctively drew back a step.

“ Does the beast bite ? ” he said to himself.

“ Fort Prince George ? Bring ‘beloved man’ ? Capteny wants ? ” Push-koosh asked, the words coming one after another, one upon another, in the joyous turbulence of sudden comprehension.

Push-koosh could do this for the *Capteny Humma Echeto* without the necessity to repair to Great Tellico. In that secret knowledge of the scheme of the now almost united tribes, many details, seeming of but scant significance, were obvious to those who had with them but little concern. For instance, the gossip brought by the tribesmen who had driven hither his horses had not till now seemed of moment to Push-koosh. A conference was in contemplation, to be held at *O-tel-who-yau-nau* (Hurricane Town), in the country of the Lower Muscogees, and several noted chiefs were to be present, especially certain disaffected spirits who desired to lay their views before the French governor through the medium of his “beloved man,” Lieutenant de Laroche, who with an escort of Cherokees was to come down expressly from Great Tellico. The choice of Hurricane Town had been in honor and placation of Padgee (the Pigeon), its mico, for he was well known to have hesitated and to be grievously ill at ease at the renunciation of Brit-

ish favor and British trade. The journey of the "beloved man" Laroche would lie, it is true, through a country especially friendly to him and his plans, but Push-koosh knew when the fleet of canoes and pettiaugres would be expected on Flint River, and it might be — lurking near — some opportunity —

His deft fingers trembled upon the trigger of his fine pistol.

Captain Howard touched his arm.

"No!" the officer said with the ringing tones of authority. "Alive!"

"Alive? — the French 'beloved man'?" Push-koosh faltered.

Captain Howard was thinking very fast. In those days when rewards were offered for the scalps of various nationalities of Indians and white men one could hardly be more certain of the genuineness of a head of hair than if it were a wig. Captain Howard had some knowledge of a flaxen scalp riven from the head of an unoffending German colonist and of the effort to make it pass current for a Spaniard's jetty hair by an Indian more disingenuous than discerning. The astute Push-koosh would never so far disregard the probabilities, but Captain Howard wanted no cheap English auburn locks from the nearest convenient British station. He must needs be sure of that subtle brain beneath the thatch. The man in person — naught else would satisfy him. "Alive — well — the 'beloved man' all in one piece!" he declared slowly, definitely.

He took his netted silk purse from his pocket and began to significantly count the golden guineas from one hand to the other. Push-koosh seemed scarcely to notice. For a moment he was as if in a daze. The breath came quick from between his parted lips; his teeth showed slightly, giving him a strange savagery of aspect; his eyes glanced hither, thither restlessly, as if he were seeking to gauge the various

points of difficulty in the undertaking. He had not moved, but the wind still fluttered in the fringes of his saffron buck-skin suit and in the crest of scarlet flamingo feathers, and the light of the dull day gleamed with a white metallic glister upon the silver headband above his dark flat forehead.

His eyes seemed suddenly afire when Captain Howard, eager that there should be no mistake in identity, asked abruptly, "Are you sure that you would know this French 'beloved man' of Tellico if you should see him again?"

Push-koosh stared for a moment motionless. Then he bent himself suddenly backward as if struck by a flaw of wind. He caught both hands to his lips as if to intercept the cry that escaped,—a fierce, shrill, tremendous note expanding through all the heavy silence of the gray day, and seeming to strike with the clamors of its savage joy against the gates of heaven.

XVIII

WHEN very quietly in the sombre depths of the midnight Callum MacIlvesty, according to orders communicated abruptly to him by the commandant, groped down to the river bank, the vague current barely glimpsed by the scintillation of some star in the ripples soon obscured by the scudding clouds, he took his seat in a boat with only two dark figures, motionless, unknown, invisible, for traveling companions. The river under the shadow of the banks was as black as Styx, and as silent as Charon was the boat's crew. On the opposite side, the Indian town of Keowee lay hushed and absolutely still. Once a dog barked, apprised in some subtle manner of the enterprise going forward, for there was no noise of movement, no word spoken. At the fort only the window of the guard-room was alight, and one listening might hear or fancy the vague footfall of the sentry walking his limited beat. The gleam from the window was but a twinkle in the gloom, and only now and again a star shone out responsive from the clouds. The muffled oars did not rattle in the locks ; there was hardly a perceptible impact as the blades were immersed in the water. The vague sense of gliding in the darkness away, swiftly away, from all the familiar world, from all that represented his experience hitherto and civilized life, whither he hardly knew, with whom he could not imagine, impressed Callum MacIlvesty's mind with a very definite repugnance for his errand, and for all the secrecy and mystery with which it had been invested. He wondered, as the sense of distance increased, as the shadow that marked the site of

the town merged indistinguishably into the darkness, as the twinkle that indicated the fort glimmered afar off, then was extinguished utterly, whether his invisible and silent companions knew more of him than he of their identity.

"Captain Howard needna hae feared I'd set mysel' a-talkin'," he said to himself, realizing that the party had been thus unexpectedly and silently hustled off in order that naught might transpire of their mission, nay, that their absence might not even be noticed at the fort, till the scheme was well on its way to execution. "I'm nane o' the sort to be given to idle clavers."

His companions might have this failing, however, he reflected, and thus he drew his plaid about him and wrapped himself in silent cogitation as in the garment.

Each of the party was himself too surly, or perhaps too proud, or it may be too doubtful of the others to express curiosity. Without a whisper, hearing each other breathe, now and again touching one another, a knee, an elbow, in moving in the strait quarters, they slipped like a phantom craft, a crew of shadows, past the wharf and the trading-house, past the group of canoes and pettiaugres anchored or beached there, past a great Indian camp of the peltry hunters, down and down the river, the current aiding the regular strokes of the oars and bearing them swiftly on.

Naught was roused along the banks except an owl, that hooting after them sent a gibing echo full of quaint vocables far along the reaches of the darkling river; and once a great splash in the water close at hand startled the oarsman, and the craft shot further out toward the centre of the stream. It was a wolf marauding in the woods and springing into the water's edge, but although he howled for a space naught seemed to hear save the solitary night and the stars now venturing forth and now lost in the tumult of the unquiet clouds. The dank wind grew chillier; the darkness more dense; then came a semblance of vision in which one

realized rather than saw great gusty bursts of rain and erratic flaws of wind striking across the surface of the river.

At length two vague pallid strata of dull clear sky revealed to Callum an old cornfield, a vast plain whose evidence of agriculture was but a memento of the past; a charred skeleton of a burnt Indian town, now without a tenant, a relic of the Cherokee War; the brown rain-soaked forests beyond with voluminous clouds bulging down among the treetops; the steely expanse of the river swirling under the fall of the torrents and the rush of the wind; and opposite to him, crouching in the bottom of the boat, Mingo Push-koosh!

The Choctaw, too, had been keenly watching for the earliest glimmer of dawn that should discover to him the faces of his silent comrades, and Callum, although knowing naught of the name or rank or nature of the man, recoiled from the look in the Indian's eye. Push-koosh stared angrily yet maliciously at his changing expression, then daunted a trifle by the arsenal of arms which the Highlanders of that day bore, dirk, claymore, pistols, musket and bayonet, marking the stalwart strength evinced by the soldier's attitude as he lay at his ease in the bow, the Mingo smoothed his ruffled crest, as if he would treacherously bide his time.

"Does Captain Howard count me no human that he suld send me campaigning wi' a panther?" Callum asked himself in amazement.

"The big Capteny thinks the two white men will make short work of poor Prince Baby," Push-koosh reflected, and when he addressed himself to rearranging his arms, as he shortly did on the pretext of protecting them from the weather, he reloaded his pistols with balls previously dipped in poison and thus rendered deadlier than before, by reason of the extraordinary aptitude which the Indians possessed in toxicology.

Only one other was of the party,—the English soldier

floutingly called, from his oft-told experiences in Spain, the Señor,—“Sinner” Kenney. To him the Highlander seemed hardly less savage than the Choctaw. The vast wilderness, in this strange and solitary duty, impressed him as appalling; the character of the hardships and dangers to be encountered was not what he had expected; his spirits had sunk immeasurably low.

All day long they held their course in the chill invisibilities of the mist and rain, two now rowing continually, with the third to lighten the labor by alternating regularly with the others. The night passed in the same dreary fashion, each sleeping by turns, that the craft might make all the speed possible. Little good-fellowship prevailed. The Choctaw hated them both alike with the rancor of his race and his prejudice against aught that was British, which he had acquired from his service with the French; and yet they were formidable soldiers, and their prowess awed him. “The Sinner” scorned the Choctaw as altogether beneath his notice, although he repented swiftly any word or act that might be accounted overt aggression, for the Indian was obviously dangerous. Connected conversation was practicable only between the two white men; but “Sinner” Kenney resented the Highlander’s repute of superiority to his station, and was by turns flippantly offensive in manner or surlily rude. There being no solid substratum of good-heartedness and comradeship in him, Callum felt that there was no pulse in common between them that might atone for the English soldier’s boorishness and coarse manners, repugnant to a man of refined breeding. MacIlvesty therefore had little or nothing to say except as regarded the expediting of their progress, and “the Sinner’s” alternating jocularities and impertinences failed for the most part to take effect by reason of the impassiveness of the Highlander and the lack of comprehension on the part of the Choctaw.

After they had entered the Savannah River "the Sinner" began to flatter himself with the prospect of meeting other river craft — this broad stream being a highway of trade — and of seeing denizens of the world hailing from the region below ; but his hopes of social interest and cheery converse were dashed by the rain and the mist which closed down impenetrably. More than one settlement they passed wrapped in invisibility in the cloud, as if they themselves were some undiscriminated element of the atmosphere. When at last the vapors began to shift and the sun to shine with a warmth all at variance with the calendar, as it was interpreted at Fort Prince George, where November, chill and drear, had worn away, they were once more in the density of the wilderness ; and suddenly one day, Push-koosh, who was steering, gave the boat a deft turn, sent it swiftly shooting in to the bank, letting it run up a little inlet. Then he sprang out ; and as it was lightened of the weight of Callum, who had stepped on shore, the Choctaw pulled the craft up on land with the amazed "Sinner" sitting in it.

He protested. "*Diablo !* Are we to leave the boat here ?" he cried aghast, looking about him at the pathless subtropical wilderness.

"This gude man kens the way," said Callum with frigid staidness. "Here is the captain's chart he gied me his nainsel'."

The round head of the experienced English foot-soldier bent over the paper. There was no mistaking the place. The inflowing of a little tributary on the Carolina side, the proximity of a ridge hard by, a series of prehistoric tumuli at no great distance, all sufficiently identified the locality. And what was that indicated toward the southwest, across the breadth of what is now the State of Georgia — a path marked out in red ink ? But there was no corresponding suggestion on the face of the tangled wooded country.

"*Voto á Dios !* I wish his 'nainsel' was in perdition !

An' this is the 'gude man' who knows the way ! He looks 'gude' enough to guide us to hell ! *Dios mio !*" suddenly catching himself, "the Injun does n't understand the lingo, does he ? *Cielos !* he is a fearsome beast !"

Callum imperiously cut short his complaints by striking off through the swamp. Push-koosh, whose outlook at life had brightened since discovering that his comrades were each as obnoxious to the other as to him, and that all three were of a mind only in antagonism to the personnel of the expedition, did not hesitate to imitate the example. With the peculiar easy gait of the Choctaw he set out at a speed that bade fair to try the mettle of the tall Highlander.

"Sinner" Kenney lingered. He looked up the broad, sunny expanse of the brimming river, then over to the Carolina side, noting the bright, soft aspect of the wintry world that would fain emulate the tender, restful peace of early spring. The flowers were not dead, it seemed to say, only asleep, and this bland zephyr might well rouse them with its sweet blandishments. The ripples played within an oar's length of the boat. He could with his single strength slide it down into the water and in five minutes be rowing briskly on his return trip to Fort Prince George. He would doubtless be able to devise some plausible explanation that would pass muster ; for instance, that he had been accidentally separated from his companions ; that the Highlander carried the chart and compass ; that thus lost in the trackless wilderness his only possibility of extrication had been to take the boat and forthwith return up the river to Fort Prince George.

And indeed as he gazed adown the shadowy region of the swamp on the Georgia side, he thought it looked much like a country in which a man might easily disappear never to return. Albeit heavily wooded, it was in great part submerged with water of varying depth. At the nearest verge he marked a long loglike protuberance, which he realized was an alligator half sunken in mud and ooze. A white

heron gleamed amidst the dusky aisles, standing motionless among those curious roots of the cypress called "knees," which projected high above the dim surface of the black water wherein they grew. The long stately stems of the tall trees themselves were reflected, pallid and columnar, by myriads from the glimmering dark expanse of the swamp, thus duplicating the densities of the half submerged forests, funerally draped with hanging gray moss in endless festoons. It seemed to stretch out illimitably, this nondescript world that was neither navigable nor yet practicable as dry land. And what might be the result of a failure to compass a fair passage? — and what were the conditions of the region on the other side? All were dependent upon the accuracy of Captain Howard's chart of this untried, unknown world, and the good faith and fair dealing of Mingo Pushkoosh! And still gazing, motionless, intent, "the Sinner" hesitated.

Down the vistas of the forest the soldier's eye was suddenly caught by the vanishing figures of the Highlander and the Choctaw, and the extraordinary speed and ease of their gait struck his attention and roused his emulation.

"Do they think they can beat me on a forced march — that Sawney, stepping like a crane, and the Choctaw with his little bandy dogtrot?"

He critically appraised their powers. His professional pride was enlisted. He suddenly set his hands one on each side of his trig little body, and like machinery fell the sure even lengths of the military double-quick; and so, speedily overhauling his companions, he went with them down into the depths of the dank forests.

The sun rose high above the river and gilded the tip of every lustrous dark wavelet and illumined the live oaks with an emerald splendor. In the shadowy swamp where the "snowy" heron stood among the cypress knees, the hanging wealth of gray moss caught the enriching beams

and glistened, fibrous and silver, from the branches of the tall white marble-like pillars of the trees. The little boat still lay empty, motionless, within an oar's length of the dancing water.

“Sinner” Kenney thought of the craft many times afterward, and sighed for its relinquishment as for a folly ; for the dreary, mutinous, fatiguing experience set at naught all the numerous previous hardships of his chequered career. The physical stress in itself was great. The Choctaw, who set the pace, could keep the same gait all day and cover the same great distance day after day, a task under which the two white men languished and flagged and almost succumbed. It would have been impossible to support the contempt of Mingo Push-koosh in their failure, and his triumph in his own superiority, had it not been for the counter-opportunity to jeer in turn, which was afforded them by the oft recurrence of the watercourses in the Creek country ; for Push-koosh could not swim. Sometimes an opportune tree uprooted by a storm afforded a footbridge for crossing a stream. More frequently the rivers were of a breadth that rendered this impossible, especially since the autumn floods from the mountains had swollen them beyond all precedent. Push-koosh must have drowned or turned back but for the assistance of his comrades, unwillingly given, by no means a friendly service, and only in the interests of the expedition.

With a hand on the shoulder of each stalwart swimmer, Push-koosh, limp with terror and horror, was propelled through the water. He was spared much, however, in that he could speculate only vaguely on the meaning of “the Sinner’s” fleer while in transit, half intended to frighten the Choctaw and half from natural and involuntary malice. “*Vamos poco á poco, amigo!* Let’s drop him now, Sawney ! Here is a deep hole ! *Porqué no ?*

They suffered much from the weight of their arms and provisions, for Captain Howard had wisely decreed that

each should be his own commissariat and none the burden bearer of the others, and when the Highlander lost his salt in the river neither of the other two would give him of their store, and the food of Callum MacIlvesty was bitter for a more æsthetic reason, as he ate it unsalted beside the fire at night, each man cooking for himself. They wrangled much, despite their lack of verbal facilities ; they quarrelled over their chart, their compass, the possibilities of shortening the way by deviating from their instructions and essaying a more direct route, and sometimes their relations during the day would become so strained that as they lay down by the camp-fire at night, they were fairly afraid of one another, lest malice develop into menace. The Scotchman had his national quarrel with the Englishman, and called him "pock pudding," and threatened to "knock his harns out." The Englishman derided the poverty of the Scots, and told gleeful tales of the lack of sophistication of "Highland recruits" in his experience, in comparison with whom, he declared, Push-koosh, the Choctaw, was a man of the world. Push-koosh laughed alike at the Highlander's kilt and the English soldier's scarlet breeches. "The Sinner" twitted the Choctaw for his artificially flattened head ; and they all would decline to mend the camp-fire to keep off the wolves until green eyes would be glistening close at hand in the underbrush, and the growl that heralds the pouncing spring would sound threateningly on the chill night air. But the preëminent triumph of Push-koosh came when they encountered more savage denizens of the woods than wolves. His was the craft to detect the approach of other Indians ; to avoid rencontre ; to erase all trace of their passage through the woods ; to slip like a ghost, invisible as it were, between camps under cover of darkness ; to skirt with infinite skill the verges of Indian towns. Once they were followed by a dog, baying discovery at every step, at last coming so close that only the discharge of an arrow stilled

his telltale cry. Once, strangely enough, a little child tottered along the deer path after them, with some vague mistake of identity in its infantile brain, and Push-koosh, being minded to thus effectively stop its approach, — “ ‘T is but a Muscogee,’ ” he said, — Callum placed his pistol at the Mingo’s temple, and even “ the Sinner ” threatened reprisal. In the midst of the wrangle some aboriginal instinct of danger stirred in the adventurous three-year-old, and after one long dismayed, open-eyed, and open-mouthed stare, it turned about on its fat legs and took its tottering flight homeward, too young to recount what it had seen or to understand what it feared.

As they neared the southern confines of the Muscogee country the Indian towns became more frequent, and detection by bands of Creeks coming and going through was imminent. This was the extreme crisis of peril, for naught could save the lives of the two British soldiers and their Choctaw guide if captured in this expedition through the country of the inimical Muscogees, who now were impatiently awaiting the signal of their French liberator to rise with all the united Indian tribes against the English rule.

Now it was that the individual traits of each of the party were asserted in such wise as to demonstrate the wisdom of the commandant’s choice of the personnel of the expedition, — the long-headed Callum’s cool and adroit adaptation of even disasters to the common advantage, and his steady endurance in the face of dangers ; the resources of the pluck and experience of the English soldier ; the woodcraft, the knowledge of Indian wiles and Indian counterwiles of the Mingo. The hardy, invincible courage of all three animated them like a common pulse, and they clung together now with a unanimity of sentiment that might hardly have been expected from their earlier lack of all the sterling qualities that make up good comradeship. Howard had expected only one of the two white men to endure to the end, to

survive the hardships of the march, the inimical chances of environment, or internecine strife amongst the three; but the trio were still together one afternoon when they emerged from the woods on a bluff overhanging the Flint River on the east, and there lay prone upon the ground, silent, not so much as moving a muscle, invisible, save to the floating American vulture circling high in the air in the majestic curves of its strong flight. The opposite banks were low and fringed with woods, and beyond and above, the red sunset of the lonely aboriginal days deployed through the sky like a pageant. Naught broke the infinite stretch of the wilderness, no shadow of cloud impinged on the glister of the river. That the foot of man had ever touched these deep reclusive solitudes only a great mound, artificially constructed, silent, imposing, surmounted with forest growths nurtured by the summers of a thousand years, attested his presence, his hopes, his griefs, and the futility of all. Somehow its outline, imposed with such significance against the range of purple hills in the distance, stretching afar off under the red and amber sky, added a melancholy to the languorous burnished haze, the slow down-dropping of the royal sun, so splendidly vermillion, and bespoke a mysterious past and a future to come as unrevealed.

The air was bland with all the suavity of a southern winter. The foliage had changed as the successive stages of their journey had led them on, as though they bore with them some benignant, embellishing secret that blessed the world as they advanced. No more the ice-girt bare bough, the sere leaf flying before the blast. The live oak, the magnolia, the laurel, lifted splendid redundant foliage to glitter glossy in the sun's last rays, and the flutter of the paroquets made the pecans merry. At a distance a palmetto tree stood out against the sky, all solitary, as if some invisible sandy beach stretched below. The subtle, alluring fragrance of the anise-tree was filling the air, and the mocking-bird sang in

the eternal spring, elated, even though the night was coming on apace.

The woods had grown a gray purple ; the river chanted a sylvan rune ; a star came out in the vermillion sky and shone aloft with a clear white glister ; and suddenly in the red and gray and green crystal lines of the stream an alien sound was borne.

A sound it was as of paddles, rhythmically striking the water. As it grew nearer, louder, a deer that had led her fawn down to drink on the opposite shore lifted her head, snuffed the air, stamped with her feet all together, and with a bound was off, her fawn beside her, a mile away, while still the concentric circles that her muzzle had stirred in the water widened to larger circumference, while still the echo of the fawn's vague bleat of alarm and surprise floated softly to the bluff on the summit of which the three emissaries lay silent.

And at last, rounding a point, came a fleet of canoes, gaudily decorated, an incident of vivid color beneath the flaring sunset, and as vividly reflected in the smooth water, tinged with all the secondary splendors of the evening glow. Beneath an umbrella-shaped fan of eagle feathers artificially mottled with crimson reclined the French officer Laroche, recognizable by his keen Gallic features, his arrogant military alertness of pose, albeit painted and arrayed with all the aboriginal splendor appertaining to his adoptive state as a great "beloved man" of the Cherokee nation. His weapons were a silver-mounted dirk and ivory-handled pistols, while fully armed stalwart Cherokees officiated as bodyguard and paddled the boat. The fleet shot so swiftly along that three cautious heads, craftily lifted, with cautious eyes keenly peering, could with difficulty distinguish the fact that the other canoes were manned by Muscogees ; the song that they half chanted, half recited, was a paeon of greeting to the beloved officer of the great French king and compared him

with favor to sundry celebrities of much note and value of their own tribe.

The three barely waited till this incident of the sunset was past, seeming in its swiftness, its unreality, some shimmering illusion of the haze-freighted air ; in its wild chromatic grotesquerie, some necromancy of the gorgeous zenith of amber and red, and the responsive dream of the mirroring water. Then without one word they rose, struck off by a short cut through the dank and darkening woods, and night had hardly fallen before the chief of Hurricane Town, individually averse to the French interest, was amazed by the trooping in of these incongruous and irrelevant figures announcing themselves as the accredited emissaries of Captain Richard Howard, and producing letters from that officer in support of their assertion, duly confirmed when read by the interpreter.

XIX

THE crash seemed afterward to Laroche like the fall of a castle of cards, like the wreck wrought by the wind in the gossamer symmetries of a cobweb, like a sudden awakening to the conditions of reality from the allurements of a dream, so potent seemed the force, so tenuous the finespun scheme when all its fibres were rent apart.

So unprescient had he been !

It was at *O-tel-you-yau-nau* (Hurricane Town) that he met his fate.

Following the many windings of the river, pausing at sundry villages by the way to receive the protestations and rivet the adherence of the gladly harkening Muscogees, he came to his objective point late the next afternoon. A great black cloud seemed to have accompanied him ; in its midst were vivid darting lightnings, frequent and menacing for a time, ever and anon showing convolutions of the vapor lighter in hue and texture, superimposed, as it were, upon the denser darker masses. Then all was dulled to a uniform consistency of tone and portent. The huts of the town, the public square, the *chooc-ofau-thluc-co*, or rotunda, the fields, whence the late harvests had been gathered, all were overshadowed thus, and the forest surrounding them seemed to support this canopy amongst its branches.

From out the town the mico and headmen had come to greet him when as their heralded guest he had approached. With white swans' wings they had gently stroked his face on either side a hundred times or more as he entered the public square ; they had placed him beside the mico on the

great white seat of the chief's council-room, *mic-ul-gee in-too-pau*; they had smoked with him the friend-pipe, and the cacina was brewed. Now and again sudden peals of thunder shook the earth, and the yellow lightnings illumined the dreary gray stretches of the forest and cloud and river and the humble little town, all crouching, as it were, amidst these harbingers of the wrath of the great elements.

So confident, so thoroughly at ease was Laroche that he could not afterward remember when those vague *indicia* of mental disquietude first became perceptible in the manner of the mico Padgee (the Pigeon). The French officer had known that this chief entertained doubts as to the policy of an intertribal peace, as a constructive constraint upon the powers and independence of the Creek Confederacy. Laroche's mission to Hurricane Town was partly to set at rest these doubts and to present in contrast the great advantages which the Muscogees would secure in the aid of all the tribal forces against the English. Only united strength and united action could avail aught against British encroachment. The national heads of the Muscogee Confederacy had formally acceded to this view, but Padgee was a man of influence, and his unreserved support was desired. A scrupulous heed the mico seemed to give to Laroche's talk of the advantages of the great Indian coalition, which was to be the subject of official discussion on the morrow upon the arrival of two other chiefs of the vicinity, whose wavering allegiance he desired to confirm by personal influence. Padgee seemed to ponder in dubitation upon every head of the discourse when, the ceremonies of welcome concluded, the two talked the matter over as they sat apart in the great assembly rotunda. Once the Indian said that the plan of Iberville many years ago was not then new. The Muscogee was a union of many adoptive tribes, the great Creek Confederacy, long before Iberville's idea of the force of a united people was ever promulgated. It was the Creek

policy, — absorption and consolidation. It was also the policy of the Six Nations, the Long House.

“It is unique and new in its aims and power,” Laroche argued, “the union of all the tribes for common aggression and common defense, to maintain aboriginal independence against European intrusion; whereas the scheme of the Creek Confederacy was to protect Creek interests only.”

Padgee made haste to nod his feathered head with a mutter of acquiescence; then he fixed his eyes attentively upon the circling figures of the tadpole dance, *Toc-co-yula-gau*, performed by four Indian braves and four squaws on the hard-trodden floor of the great assembly rotunda. The shadows duplicated their feathered heads upon the red painted earthen walls, and beyond the mad whirl of substance and semblance Laroche could look forth through the great portal opposite and see the night lowering, purple and black, and note how the storm gathered and bided its time, while the yellow lightnings now and again keenly flashed. He began to fancy that some deft hand had sown seeds of dissatisfaction more formidable in their upspringing than dragon’s teeth. He was sure some English suggestion had drawn the parallel between the limited policy of the Creek Confederacy and the universal brotherhood promised by the union of all tribes. Still more definite was the echo of an intrusive voice in the councils when Padgee opined, with many an involution, that he loved old times and old ideas best. Said they of earlier years, — wiser than the men of to-day, — that it was well that the British and French should fight each other. Thus the Muscogees between, courted by both, had much peace — except when it pleased them to conquer and absorb smaller tribes.

This was impossible now, Laroche argued, since the Cherokees had joined fortunes once and for all with the French, who also commanded the Choctaw allegiance. The Muscogees could not alone maintain neutrality.

He spoke sharply, and then checked himself that he should be so definitely nettled. Hurricane Town was at best inconsiderable. Padgee was not a representative man. To-morrow would bring the important chiefs whose suspected dissatisfaction could be obviated by conceding their reasonable desires. This was no official occasion, and Padgee doubtless was taking advantage of the *tête-à-tête* to bring forward his discontents that he might be remembered when lubricating presents were in order, to make the project run the more smoothly. He was obviously talking to hear himself talk ! Nevertheless, Laroche was conscious of an increase of impatience when the voice of Padgee, more like a hawk than a dove, was once more rising on the air with a queer blending of plaint and discontent and apology.

He meant no harm, said Padgee. He loved the officer of the great French king like a brother. But the British goods were well named, being good ! And he sighed, as being loath to relinquish the values of a trade so long enjoyed.

Floutingly, as if he hardly cared to reply at all, Laroche averred that French merchandise was famous for its quality all the world over, and more than that, it was cheap.

Once more Padgee caught himself and protested that it was not for him to say ; the Creek national headmen would decide the question.

"They *have* decided it long ago," Laroche interrupted him.

Certainly, Padgee was aware of that, but he felt the loss. *O-tel-you-yau-nau* (Hurricane Town) had been a favorite stand of the British traders in times past, and the people loved them.

The long serpentine lines of the lighted cane burning upon the floor were growing dim, flickering, dying out gradually. The dreary night without in the quick keen flashes of the lightning was brighter, more distinct, than the dome-shaped

rotunda sinking into shadow. The dance was over, the place nearly empty of people. Laroche rose suddenly with a more indubitable monition of treachery. He looked about him for his Cherokee bodyguard. Secure among friends, he had dismissed them to enjoy the hospitalities and return the courtesies of their coadjutors of the new alliance. Padgee, noting the movement, rose too, speaking very rapidly, as if there were scant time to be lost, while the great spaces of the *chooc-ofau-thluc-co* darkened yet more duskily and the vague lights of the cane trembled to extinction. Outside, the lightning unsheathed its vivid blades, flashing athwart the sky, and the thunder pealed and burst explosively and rolled away, muttering, to the further hills.

It was a long time, said Padgee plaintively, since a British trader had been able to ply his kind and beneficent vocation in Hurricane Town for fear of the martial French at Fort Toulouse; and since the French sent no traders to the villages, save now and then a mere peddler, slipping back and forth from his fort, afraid of his shadow, the Indians of Hurricane Town were often utterly destitute of all those artificial supplies which they needed, so civilized had they come to be. They were fit to die of shame should any one observe how far behind the fashion of the day had they trailed. Only very recently a Chickasaw chief had come to Hurricane Town in a splendid embroidered suit from a British trader, and he, the great mico, Padgee, had naught in which to meet him that was of European manufacture but a cocked hat and a pair of silver shoe buckles.

He paused impressively. Doubtless he felt, as one might say in the artistic jargon of this day, that these articles did not "compose well" with the rest of his attire, a shirt of bead-wrought buckskin and leggings decorated with turkey-cock spurs and fawn's trotters. Laroche made no reply. Somehow the crisis tingled in his nerves like some electrical current before the event was precipitated.

Therefore, Padgee resumed very swiftly, some folk of a town far off — he could not just say where — had come up to-night to meet the great French officer and — confer with him concerning the condition of the British trade.

Laroche turned upon him.

“Padgee!” he exclaimed, “is this well? I have eaten your bread, I have eaten your salt!”

The mico hesitated at the last moment, but half hearted in his deceit. Perhaps the appeal to the sanctions of his rude hospitality might have availed even now, but its force was abrogated by the possibilities. The British soldiers awaited no longer the preconcerted signal. Military figures, barely distinguishable in the gloom from other shadows of the darksome place, were climbing down from behind the tiers of seats of the primitive amphitheatre; and although one, “the Sinner,” lost his footing and fell rolling down the descent with great thumps, the Highlander was upon Laroche so quickly, so powerfully, that his strong hand stifled the cry for help.

It was managed with infinite address and secrecy, for the two British soldiers would have fallen victims to their own temerity had they dared to show themselves openly and alone, among the Indians, if unprotected and at their mercy. As to the Choctaw, the mere revelation of his personality, with a price upon his head, would have meant his death. Therefore Padgee, armed with his authority as mico, headed the guard of Muscogee braves, his own attendants, whom he designed to send with the captors to Fort Prince George, and accompanied them several miles on the return march. As he had long been inimical to the coalition so earnestly advocated by the French, this fact was the reason that Laroche had appointed Hurricane Town as the rendezvous of the lukewarm, that he might be sure of gaining the ear of Padgee and confirming his allegiance by argument and the example of others. It had needed but a word from

Push-koosh to acquaint Captain Howard with this important circumstance, and the British officer in treating with the chief of Hurricane Town had held out prospects of high advancement. Thereafter Padgee had no need to complain of the lack of gold and European gewgaws when visited by strangers; in fact, he was in case to disport himself with a pride in apparel that might better befit a peacock than the humble pigeon whose name he bore.

When the populace outside of the rotunda learned that the great French "beloved man" had been arrested mysteriously in the British interest, they received the news with a wild outcry of despair and muttered threats and even efforts at rescue. More than one, especially in the neighboring towns, suspected that the indifference of Padgee to the success of the French schemes might have contributed to the catastrophe, but none dreamed that the hospitality of Hurricane Town had been violated, that Padgee had renounced the guest within the gates and delivered him up to his enemies, to be dragged away by force to a cruel doom. Hours had passed—indeed it was near day—before the news transpired, and although the Cherokee bodyguard set out at once upon the trail of the captors, they soon found that time itself could not overtake the party. For themselves they were few, unprepared, in a country bristling with hostile conditions, for the commandant at Fort Toulouse, as soon as apprised of the catastrophe, sent out a detachment to attempt a rescue, and the Cherokees feared to be held accountable for the capture of the French officer as for a lapse of vigilance. They therefore relinquished the effort, took moodily to their boat, refusing the tearful condolences of Hurricane Town, and pulled up the Flint River again, lamenting loudly all the way, to the Cherokee country.

What thoughts came to Laroche that stormy night as he half toiled and was half dragged among his captors through the tangled ways of the wilderness! A thousand vain re-

grets tortured him. The recapitulation of events that might have been ordered otherwise trailed in long sequences through his mind. A vision constantly recurred of a result so different, seeming so real, that only a slight wrench of will would be requisite to tear him from this oppressive dream which surely must needs presently dissolve in obvious fact.

Nevertheless his intellectual faculties, heedful of cause and effect, perceived that the flight was ordered with a craft that bade fair to eliminate all chance of rescue or escape. That they should take their way to the north or diagonally across Georgia was so obviously their proper policy that Padgee turned their steps directly to the south, whence none would dream of following. To increase the distance more effectually and obliterate the traces of their passage through the country, he availed himself of his own boat, hidden among the saw-grass of the marshy borders of a neighboring watercourse, down which they rowed and drifted out of all calculations of pursuit. Indeed this deviation took them so far to the south that they could discern the tang of salt water on the breeze, and hear the voice of the surf singing the iterative song of the sea. Only then did they disembark and take up the line of march toward the Savannah River once more.

Their progress was infinitely laborious; the weather had clouded, and rain filled the marshes and overflowed the streams. Often a fire was impracticable, and without shelter, short of food, in terror of capture, and now and again endangered by faction, the sufferings of the captors were hardly discounted by the anguish of the prisoner. Only once did a chance of escape present itself.

Laroche had observed that the Highlander, now taking command of the party, according to his orders, studiously prevented any opportunity for the prisoner to speak apart with any single individual. MacIlvesty had of course dis-

armed Laroche and taken from him all such valuables as might tempt the integrity of the others.

"Is this a' your gowd?" he asked.

"Untie my hands and receive my parole, or else run your own risks," retorted the French officer.

"An' fine wad I like to do that, but it is contrary to my orders," said Callum kindly, "sae I maun e'en look to you mysel'."

This he did with a vigilance that showed no possibility of relaxation till one stormy night when they gained once more the banks of the Savannah River and found their further progress barred; for their boat, left there, to serve their return, had vanished.

It was near dawn when they made this discovery. The rain had ceased at last, though the clouds were still scudding through the gusty sky. A late waning moon showed in the east, infinitely melancholy in the cloud-rack of the tempest. The simple voices of the denizens of the swamp, overawed to silence by the violence of the storm, resumed their vague indiscriminate nocturne, the shrilling of a screech-owl, at intervals the noisy clangor of cranes, and once the blood-curdling scream of a catamount. The party had halted on the crest of a ridge overlooking the swollen watercourse, lashed to a swifter current by the turbulence of the wind. The boat, which they had left with every security in this solitary place, had been yet more definitely concealed. A tricksy gust had upset it, and in the glimmering light, as it floated bottom upward, it was not recognized.

As the two British soldiers patroled the banks, and now consulted together, and again hastily resumed the search, Push-koosh, standing near the prisoner, looking backward over his shoulder again and again, murmured against this loss of time. Then once more he scanned the woodsy track by which they had come, all glistening with moisture, and illumined by the drear light of the waning moon. He so

obviously feared a rescue, that Laroche's heart could but plunge at the prospect. A heron cried out dismally from the dense cane and marshy tangles beside the river, attesting the solitude. If but the rope that bound his hands were cut! The two men on the margin below passed the boat and repassed it, as held by its sheet-chain tangled about the submerged roots of a tree, its capsized bottom seemed but a boulder washed by the ripples as it lay in the shadow. As once more Push-koosh glanced warily, impatiently, over his shoulder, Laroche suddenly bethought himself of the peculiarities of his character and the details of their long service together. There was no mistaking his identity,—it was sufficiently attested by the contour of his head, with the silver band on his flat forehead, the red flamingo feathers all tipped with silver by the moon, and the beautiful tones of his velvet voice as he muttered his Choctaw imprecations.

"Ah, Push-koosh," cried Laroche softly, a vibration of hope and joy in his tone, "*mon Bébé, mon petit chou! Je reconnais bien ton bon cœur.*"

Push-koosh turned instantly and looked straight at the French officer. The moonlight was full in the Indian's dark inscrutable eyes.

"There is gold in the bottom of my tobacco bag, Prince Baby,—much gold. Cut this rope and it is yours!"

An instant of doubt, and then the Choctaw approached with that sly supple motion so like the step of a catamount. One stroke of his knife and Laroche would be free to flee through the marshy forests, while the two British soldiers and the Muscogee tribesmen hunted for the boat that was before their eyes, and wrangled till the echoes were loud and discordant.

The Choctaw's touch was laid, not upon the pouch with its treasure amidst the tobacco that had escaped the search of the Highlander, but upon the bound bands held out to

him with a piteous eagerness of entreaty. Then looking the captive directly in the eye, Push-koosh said with an indescribable fullness of significant reminder, "*Eho choo-koma!*!" (the beautiful woman!)

XX

THE snow lay deep at Fort Prince George when they returned.¹² The air was now clear of flakes, invested with that strange absolute funereal stillness characteristic of the muffled world, but the sky was still darkly gray and with a menace in its motionless solemnity. The roofs of the block-houses and barracks showed densely white against the slate-colored clouds; not even about the great smoking chimneys was a trace of thaw. The palisades that surmounted the unbroken white walls of the rampart upheld fluffy drifts lodged among the sharp-pointed stakes. The glacis was only such a faint outline as might remain in vague traces of a prehistoric work. The prickly branches of a strong abatis on two sides of the fort thrust out darkly from the overwhelming banks like the protest of a buried forest. The thousand stumps, relics of the encampment of Colonel Grant's army here the preceding year, were utterly submerged, and gave more than one of the approaching party a headlong fall as the two British soldiers, the Choctaw Mingo, and the Muscogee guard, with their prisoner, all half frozen, dead beat, and nearly starved, came within view from the gates. The ditch was half full of ice, solid as a rock, but the heart of the sentry was all aglow to behold them at a distance, and his jubilant call, "Corporal of the guard!" reached them as they struggled across the intervening spaces with the grateful realization that they were not to be kept waiting for identification, while the last resources of endurance gave way at the moment of rescue and the portal of refuge.

A clangor of weapons, keen and clear on the icy air, the

tramp of marching feet, the glitter of steel and scarlet cloth, came to them through the great gate, following hard on the cry to turn out the guard. In less than five minutes the red glow of great fires, ardent spirits unsparingly administered, hot food, and the comforts of beds and blankets invested the recollection of the struggle through the snow, the tramp of more than two hundred miles, the dangers and vicissitudes of the journey with a certain unreality, seeming rather something they had wildly dreamed, were it not for the testimony of each to reinforce the memory of the others.

Exhaustion limited their capacity for expression, but the whole fort rejoiced in their stead. The news flew abroad like the flocks of snowbirds all undaunted by the temperature. The tale of the notable capture was told over and again in the guard-room, in the officers' mess-room, in the barracks, and the farrier's smithy ; over the making of the clumsy cartridges of that day for the little cannon on the bastions, and around the mending of guns in the armorer's forge ; in the wigwams of the Indian hunters and camp followers of whatever sort whose temporary habitations were on the outside of the works ; in the Cherokee town of Keowee, hard by, and at Jock Lesly's trading-house. Even down into the depths of the earth to the Scotchman's subterranean ingle-neuk it penetrated, and there it found Lilius sitting on a buffalo rug before the red fire, her hands clasped tightly, her eyes wildly dilated, pale to the lips, and with her heart fluttering frantically, painfully, hopelessly, like one of the many birds perishing without, whose wings, swift though they were, had beat futilely against the infinite forces of destiny embodied in the storm ; for she — and she only — saw aught beyond cause of gratulation in the capture of the turbulent French emissary, the destroyer of the peace of the frontier, the arch-plotter, the organizer of Indian armies, the reconciler of Indian feuds, the confederator of all Indian tribes into one great united, potent structure of government

financed and armed through Spanish and French aid, before which British colonial occupation could hardly stand for a day.

"Callum took the man! It was Callum, and he maun hae the credit!" Jock Lesly jubilantly declared as he sat rubbing his hands by the fire, his snowy match-coat sending up a steam as the drifts melted from it, for he was just returned from the fort. "Captain Howard is as gleg as a grig! He hae won his majority by this bit o' wark, I mak nae dout!"

"What will be the Frenchman's name?" demanded Liliias, her lips dry as she stared, dismayed, startled, forlorn, into the fire.

"A-weel—a-weel—hinny, and that's the curious part of it! It's that Tam Wilson, the loon we nursed clear of the fever! And I misdoubts it's misprision o' treason, or some o' thae unchancy crimes—only we kenned naught aboot him!" And Jock Lesly's rich rollicking laughter filled the room.

"He helped us out o' the kentry, an' kep' Moy Toy frae takin' our scalps!" she replied reproachfully.

Jock Lesly paused to look down at her gravely, his big eyes round. "Hout, fie!" he ejaculated. "Ony French chiel protect *me*! An' frae auld Moy Toy, that I have foregathered wi' ever since the kentry was built! Mair likely he spirited up the chief to trouble us an' to burn my tradin'-house an' a' my gear! It seems to me I jaloosed su'thin' o' the sort at ane time! Na, na, Liliias; if he helped us at a', it was lest our murder hurt the French interest an' set the British at the Injuns afore the chiels were ready for their bluidy wark."

She gazed, deeply serious, at the fire. She too thought this more than likely, in the light of what she had known earlier, and knew more certainly now. She gave a long sigh of pity for the captive; but these were the fortunes of war that every soldier must needs risk, and with which women had no concern.

“Na, bairn, na!” her father boasted. “Auld Jock Lesly can tak care o’ his ain, an’ hae dune it this mony a day! He needna hae Tam Wilson cluttered up wi’ heed o’ him an’ his! But, lass!” he broke into a roar of jovial laughter, “to see up yon at the fort the major — hegh, sirs, it’s for luck that I suld sae miscall the captain — ter see him gloat ower Everard. He canna be quit o’ glorifying that he tuk him in sae hard a measure when Everard had him like a bird in a trap.”

“What for did Lieutenant Everard let him slip?” she asked, turning her head upward to look at her father’s face.

“A fule needs no reason, lass, for bein’ a fule, but he wadna believe Callum, because the lad could urge naething except that the man spoke French — which Callum himsel’ can do, though that wad never prove him a toad.”

“An’ how is it that this captain was sae muckle wiser?” persisted Lilias. “Lieutenant Everard is a finer lookin’ man than Captain Howard, an’ his hair curls amaist as weel as mine.”

“Oh, ho!” shouted Jock Lesly, smiting his thigh in the fervor of his relish, “that only proves he has the better thatch, not the bigger house! A-weel, now — a-weel — ilka man suld hae his due! ’T was not till lately — an’ Lieutenant Everard was gone — that Callum learned for *sure* that the man is French, — for you see the fallow himsel’, — and he is a fule too, for all his hair curls, — he tauld a woman that he is French and gave her his name and employ, and the woman tauld Callum! My certie, in ilka mischief there’s aye a woman at wark!” Then with a changed note, “Hegh, Lilias!” he exclaimed sharply.

For Lilias, screaming, had sprung to her feet. It was she — and she saw it now — who had delivered him bound and helpless into the hands of his enemy! She cared not for him now as Tam Wilson, but for the awful responsibility she had taken. Her habitual candor was beaten back

upon her lips by the untoward effects of her recent disclosure. She restrained with difficulty the childlike impulse to reveal the mystery to her father, who was alarmed, amazed, agitated. She protested that the fire had burned her, flinging out a spark, and demanded peevishly why he must needs be always sending such crackling and splitting varieties of wood to their hearth in the cave-house. With wisps of his frowzy light hair falling over his florid face as he bent his head, he was presently stepping about to find the blazing splinter in the buffalo rug, and although he now and again desisted, with the comment "A-weel, it will no set *this* biggin' in a low!" he shortly, with the force of habit, commenced the search anew.

It was the custom of Lilius to avoid the trading-house, for she was more fastidious and exacting than her simple opportunities might seem to imply. But Jock Lesly was by no means poor, and it had been his delight to lavish such luxuries as in his limited apprehension he accounted desirable upon his only child, and thus she had been reared in a degree beyond her station. To-day, however, she was here, there, and everywhere, listening to the loud jocular comments of a few of the soldiers from the fort, who were now and again in the store and disposed to talk of the capture. The transition thence was obviously to gossip about the prisoner. A hearty, well-favored lad he was, so they understood from the detail that had captured him. He had given them little trouble, and they liked him well. He was a proper lad and active afoot, and bore the hardships of the march finely. They hardly knew what to do with him at the fort till he could be sent forward to Charlestown. They thought Captain Howard himself was puzzled as to the method of his disposition. Certainly,—in reply to a question from Jock Lesly,—military prisoners, that is, French officers, had been in times past kept in the hospital, and giving their parole had been permitted occa-

sionally the freedom of the parade ground. This fellow, however, was captured out of uniform and without ostensible military employ, and would be held as a civil prisoner, though they had him now hard and fast in the guard-house. The talk of peace negotiations with France would do him no good,—the stirrer-up of savages on the frontier, just subdued by the English at so great a cost of blood and treasure, and at peace with the colonies, would never lack for a charge in Charlestown that would stick. He would be accused of murders, and of the instigation of those massacres that had already violated the peace negotiated with the Cherokees. And then one of the soldiers passed his hand across his throat with an ugly gesture, rolled up his eyes with a leer, and gave a click of the tongue inexpressibly loathsome, at which, unaccountably, they all laughed.

Lilias, hovering about among the swaying fabrics depending from the beams, turned sick and faint. She it was who had done this, in her foolish inadvertence thinking that all was now known to Callum,—she, who had the man's secret that she had promised never to tell—nay, he had voluntarily trusted himself to her honor!

Her face was drawn and white. The chill of the day was in her heart. As one of the Indians whisked a hand mirror into which he was gazing with gurgling rapture at his hideous countenance, she caught sight of her own reflection, so wan, so appealing, so agonized, that she braced her nerves anew that her face might not betray her grief, although she felt at the end and hoped naught.

A number of the braves of the Muscogee escort who had participated in the march subsequent to the capture of the prisoner had repaired, although exhausted and half drunk, to the trading-house as inevitably as the needle to the pole, and were engaged in delightedly rummaging such of its trifles as were accessible. They were meeting with special welcome at Fort Prince George, at the officers' quarters, the barracks, the

kitchen, the trading-house being generously treated, their services having proved available in so serious an emergency. Naturally with such subjects, their instinct was to impose upon this disposition, and to magnify the obligations it betokened.

"Haud a care, Dougal," Jock Lesly charged the under-trader. "Thae chiels covet ilka bawbee's worth in the house, an' Providence permittin' I suld like fine to save the roof!"

Perhaps it was this absorption that caused him to be more oblivious of Lilius to-day than usual, though even in its midst he had a heedful notice of her. "Hegh, lass," he stopped her once in passing, "but ye hae a' the snaw in your face the day, an' your bonny blue e'en are a wee dreary. I misdoots the climate here wi' a' its changes an' cantrips isna suited to ye like Charlestoun. Gae doun to the fire in the ha' house; it's warmer there."

When she quitted the trading-house he did not know. She was all alone, attended only by the old collie, who would not be driven back, although she childishly pinched his ears and pulled his tail and put him to all the pain she could. Her visit to the fort was a very distinct surprise to Captain Howard and contravened his impressions of her hitherto. Being a man of about forty-five years of age, and having daughters of his own far away, he entertained rather strict ideas of the becoming in maidenly conduct. It may have been her own natural dignity, or the arrogance of a girl reared beyond her station, or the indifference of one perceiving the raw material of suitors apparently inexhaustible in the garrisons of the frontier, but she had been hitherto somewhat unapproachable by the men at the post, averse to those of the ruder social level of her father's daughter, and suspicious and cold to those above. Therefore when she cast upon Captain Howard a smile, the radiance of which might have thawed out all Fort Prince George, he was mystified and expectant.

Her first words, however, put him at ease as he sat at the table in the orderly room with an ensign opposite and two or three noncommissioned officers with their reports standing at attention.

"I'm fu' glad to catchit you at your wark, Captain," she said with her most dulcet intonation, swaying the half open door, and looking against the snowy expanse of the parade without like some clear fine painting on a pearly surface. "I wad like ill to harry ye out o' your hour o' ease, wi' a' thae bodies," she glanced about at the orderlies and the sentry and a squad of men outside, "to weigh sae heavy on your mind."

She hesitated as she stood in her puce-colored serge skirt, from which the snow dripped, a heavy red rokelay thrown around her, and one of those "screens," half shawl, half veil, worn by women in the lowlands as well as the highlands of Scotland, brought over her head in the muffling manner usual in wintry weather. Beneath its loosened folds her golden hair, her pink and white dimpled face, her glittering teeth and red lips, showed captivatingly, and Captain Howard must have been something more than military and human had he not offered her a chair.

"I canna sit, for I hinna a moment," she replied, but she came toward the fire, and an orderly, mindful of the blast, promptly shut the door as she relinquished her hold upon it. "I wad hae sent somebody, but thae chiels of Injuns are fair crowding out the packmen at the trading-house, and my daddy winna spare a man to leave there till the Muscogees are far awa' — twal mile or more."

Her eyes twinkled alluringly, in ridicule of auld Jock's thrifty bent, and Captain Howard smiled responsively.

"Sae fur the lack of a better messenger I maun e'en do my ain errand. You see, Captain," — she leaned against the back of a chair, and he opposite, having taken a seat with the anticipation of her acceptance of his proffer, gazed at her

expectantly, — “the soldiers are making much o’ Callum, an’ my daddy is looking after the Muscogees, an’ I was minded to consider that naebody is like to care much for the prisoner. So knowin’ you hinna too much beddin’ gear at the fort, an’ the weather bein’ freakish cauld, I thought I wad roll up a blanket or twa an’ some furs for the creatur’s bed.”

He was surprised for a moment, vaguely suspicious, doubtful.

“Just for a loan, ye maun understand,” she stipulated primly. “When the weather breaks I sall look to hae them a’ again.”

This thrifty afterthought was so characteristic of Jock Lesly and his household that the officer’s mind instantly cleared. He remembered previous instances of such thoughtfulness on her part, but manifested then toward the hospital. Indeed in a passing illness he had himself been the pleased recipient of wine whey, arrowroot gruel, mulled port, chocolate, and calves’ foot jelly.

He hastened to express his appreciation of the timeliness of her offering. “The usual arrangements are somewhat scant for such weather, and I have no doubt it is needed. The guard-house prison has no fire, and it must be pretty chilly there, though there is a great chimney in the next room.”

“Will ye no look at the gear ?” She produced from under her cloak a bundle compactly made up, from the edges of which otter fur showed.

The officer politely waived the precaution.

“Not at all necessary.” Then somewhat wearied with these details, which the fairest face could not commend for indefinite contemplation, — at least to one having attained forty-five years, — “Will you be so good as to give them to the orderly ? Nevins, take them to the guard-house.”

But Liliás, turning upon the advancing soldier, clasped her bundle in a closer clutch. “I’m no sae clear that

the prisoner-body will e'er see them — an' sall I get them a' again? Thae bit duds are unco gude," she added, as if loath to part from them.

The soldier reddened to the eyebrows under this imputation, and the officer, disillusioned of his admiration by this crafty, untimely, ignoble, unfounded suspiciousness, sought to rid himself of the whole affair.

"Take them yourself to the prisoner, then, and count them before leaving them, so that you may be sure of having them all returned. Baker, see to it that the sentry at the guard-house passes her."

As she went out, "'Aye be getting and aye be having,'" he quoted, "a chip of the old block." He said this as if to himself, but aloud, partly to assuage the lacerated feelings of the man whom he had called Nevins, and as if her suspiciousness were not a personal flout, but merely appertained to the cautious thrift of her canny Scotch nature.

The guard had turned out upon the advance from the woods of a considerable body of Indians, who, however, proved to be only neighboring tribesmen without organization, but eager and curious concerning the excitements at the fort, of which they had heard in the adjacent Cherokee town of Keowee. They were not to be permitted to enter, as they evidently desired, but their pertinacity to this end detained the officer of the guard for a few minutes, while he sought to pacify them by giving them authentic details on those points about which they were most inquisitive. Meantime the guard, lined up, stood in a glittering rank of scarlet and steel on the snowy spaces just in front of the gate.

The guardroom was thus empty when Lilius, admitted by the sentry at the outer door of the building, made her way with hasty, disordered steps through the apartment. She hesitated at the inner door for an instant, not recognizing the beating of her own heart, which at first she mistook for some turbulent alarm outside, drumming the whole garrison to

arms. The next moment she plunged into the room, and there was Tam Wilson ! oh puir Tam Wilson ! so pinched, so blue, so cold, sitting in this frostbound cell, with his head upon the table, and his face in his hands, — all his plans congealed in this hard freeze of fate and dead like other transient blooms of the year under the snow.

As he looked up at the sound of her step, he recognized her upon the instant. A faint wan smile quivered in his face. He was about to speak, but she laid her finger warningly upon her lips. Then with one hasty glance at the closed door behind her, she tore her bundle open and rushed at him. She had another skirt such as she herself wore — of brown serge, but little to choose between the shades — and slipped it over his head in one moment. Then as she vainly sought to make her slender waistband meet about his middle, although he too was slim, she commented in a whisper, “ My certie ! to be built like a cask ! I ’ll een pin it in the plaits, but it will no hing straight in the hem ! ” She doffed her red cloak to throw it about him ; her screen was on his head, and realizing her intention, he could but kiss her hands as she adjusted it under his chin, muffling his face and shoulders as she had herself worn it, and taking the precaution to pin it here and there. “ For ye ’ll get it aff afore ye are to the woods if I dinna haud a care ; an’ once in the woods by the river ye ’ll find under that big crag a canoe, an’ below the seat a gude store of food an’ wine. An’ to Charlestoun, lad, straight down the Keowee River and the Savannah an’ out to sea ! Some French ship will tak ye up, I mak nae doubt. The pursuit will set the other way — to the Cherokee country.”

“ And you ? ”

“ Never fear ! I ’ll bide here — safe — amang my friends. Walk like me if ye can ; but be aff, callant, if ye luve your life ! ”

She sank into his chair ; and mercurial though he was,

he could scarcely take up the rôle with the spirit with which she had laid it down. As he opened the door into the guard-room he saw that the soldiers had not yet returned. He barely glanced at the sentry whom he passed on the outer step ; and although the notice of the soldier was but the casual attention of recognition and expectation, he felt the man's look as if it had been red-hot steel laid on a tender nerve. He walked down slowly into the snow, blessing its depth that should make any eccentricity of gait, except a long stride, seem the incident of its impeding medium. In meeting the guard halfway returning from the gate, he had but to mince modestly along, not lifting his eyes, the screen drawn quite over his face ; and since Miss Lilius was an uncommonly tall woman and the Frenchman of but medium height, the difference was not immediately apparent.

A sudden swift rush behind him just before he reached the gate — that great envious portal that barred him from all his world, from safety, from life itself — and he felt that he must drop here in the snow and die, if so happy a fate as a death thus he might crave.

He had not had time to cry aloud in terror, in nervous stress, in absolute despair, when the pursuing presence whizzed past, then returning, leaped and fawned and wheezed about him with such evident blissful recognition that if Miss Lilius Lesly had no other point of identification to the eye of the sentry it would have been supplied in the jovial manner of her companion, the faithful old collie. The soldier presented arms as her semblance passed, to which extravagant compliment the figure returned a bow of marked courtesy, and then followed over the snow the frantically bounding collie, that was fairly frenzied with joy to see and recognize anew, despite his feminine frippery of attire, his friend of auld lang syne, Tam Wilson ; for the instinct of the collie was not so limited an endowment as the intelligence of the sentry and the main guard.

XXI

IN her after life Lilius often reviewed her sentiments as she sat there in the blue cold, with that curious suggestion of grit in the air common to a low temperature, the repulsion to the dust of the place more pronounced and apparent to the sensitive finger-tips than if it were summer. She had wrapped herself in the otter-fur mantle that she had carried in view of the relinquishment of her red rokelay to the fugitive. Presently she put both feet on the rungs of the chair and crouched forward like some tiny animal, her golden hair barely glimpsed beneath the light brown tints of the fur. Sometimes she put her blue hands to her mouth to feel how chill they were, and blew her warm breath upon them; then again she clenched the trembling fingers and drew her mantle closer. How cold it was! How had he endured it! It might be colder still on the river, but he was speeding toward freedom, and there was genial warmth in the mere suggestion. How cruel men were to each other! And he was but obeying the behests of his government, as Captain Howard regarded as sacred every scrawl that reached him from headquarters.

Now and again the sounds from the guardroom caught her attention,—a tramp of feet with a measured swinging gait, a snatch of song, and presently a droning deep voice going on and on, as one should say for an hour or more, with but little interruption, telling a long story.

How cold it was! how cold! She wondered how long she could sustain it. The longer she sat here in her wrap of otter fur the farther he would be on his way down the

Kecwee River. If only she could know that he had made good his escape ! that she had atoned for the dreadful evil she had wrought in revealing his secret ! Then indeed she would be happy ! In liberating him, she argued, she had promoted no massacre of women and children. If aught that he had planned threatened them it was frustrated, for he was off and on his way out of the country, and she had aided his flight, nay, made it possible. If only she could know that he had won the river bank and found the canoe ! Down and down the Savannah he would paddle the canoe, and a man in buckskins, the usual garb of the country, — for he would soon doff the woman's habiliments, — would attract no attention from casual observers on the banks ; and some night — some dark night soon — he would float out of Charlestown harbor, and finally be picked up by some French man-of-war or merchantman, so many there were then in the southern waters. The pursuit would undoubtedly take head in the opposite direction. Few would imagine it safer to flee directly toward the enemy's stronghold rather than from it. They would follow him back into the Indian country, where he had friends, influence, the French prestige — a thousand reasons to command succor and concealment. But to Charlestown — into the lion's mouth ? In this instance the lion slept with his mouth open. Somehow she was sure no one would think of this resource but herself. She would give him all the time she could, a good start ahead of all possible pursuit. Six hours it might be, if she could so long endure the cruel cold, before the noise of his escape should be bruited abroad. The noonday meal was just concluded. The British soldier was presumed to eat no supper ; at least, only two meals were furnished him, except on the frontier, where to content him the better, perhaps, on the theory that the road to his heart lay through his stomach, a third was served. This came a little before the hour of retreat. She wondered if the prisoners shared

in this extra refection. She had an idea that then at all events she must needs call in the guard; she would be able to endure it no longer.

As she sat crouching and still in the only chair of the bleak and bare apartment, her attention was attracted by a crystalline tinkle against the glass of the window. She thought it must be snowing afresh. Presently she rose, stood upon the chair, for the window was exceedingly high, to be out of the reach of any enterprising prisoner, and then she stepped noiselessly upon the table. Looking upward through the grimy glass she could see the whirl of dizzy flakes against the sky. A tumultuous storm it was. A man fleeing through it would be invisible. It would render pursuit impracticable, so long as it should continue. Her heart gave a great throb of triumph. The afternoon was wearing on. The light was dulling fast, and unless a barricade of ice should impede the flow of the river these few hours' start would mean freedom to a man fleeing for his life!

Reassured, invigorated, she stepped slowly, softly down from the table to the chair, and then from the chair to the floor. She seated herself anew in silence, in loneliness, muffled to her eyebrows in her otter furs, and listening to the gay snatches of song about the great flaring hearth in the guardroom.

And it was cold, it was very cold!

During the afternoon Jock Lesly decided to tramp over to the fort. He had a desire to compare views with Captain Howard and expatiate on the incident of the capture, so full of import to them both,—to the soldier as representing the military element, and the trader the mercantile interests of the post. He had scarcely stretched out his smoking boots to the fire, seated in the officer's comfortable quarters, than Captain Howard introduced the subject of the weather in reference to the prisoner, intending to thank the

trader for the consideration he had manifested in sending blankets to the fort, in view of the arctic temperature.

"We ought to consider our obligations to the helpless," said the officer, "but, as far as I am concerned, Gad, sir, I 'm kept so short for funds that it is often like letting a faithful soldier and servant of the king go cold in order to house and blanket and warm some miscreant enemy to the whole community."

"Ou, aye, weel," said auld Jock, a trifle out of countenance, "I 'm oblieged for your sarmon, sir. D' ye mean ye think I ought to blanket an' mainteen the king's prisoners at bed an' board ? "

"No, oh no," exclaimed the officer. "I only meant to thank you for the blankets and furs and so on that your daughter brought over to-day, kindly bethinking herself of the likelihood that the prisoner would be neglected. In truth we have been surprisingly short, and if the soldiers were not young and strong and had not a good deal of red blood in their veins, I should expect to hear that some of them had frozen stiff."

"Wow, man, to be plain, I never heard o' thae blankets afore !" Jock Lesly confessed. "The lassie helpit her nainsel', as she has a perfect right to do, and I sall ne'er say her nay. All my gear an' hoardings will be hers ane day. An' I doubt not she 'll find some feckless ne'er-do-wel of a husband ter fling it a' awa'. But it 's hers, it 's a' hers. I wark for nane else, but," with an anxious pause and a keen glance, "did ye notice whether it was the lamb's wool or the yowe's wool blankets that the bairn had ? "

"I did not see them at all," said the officer hastily. "I only assured her that she should have them all back safe, and bade her distribute them to her own satisfaction."

Jock Lesly rose to his feet. This was a topic on which he could not rest in uncertainty. She might give away the blankets as she would, but his curiosity as to which quality

she had seen fit to take actually burned him. He presently went tramping across the parade, and Captain Howard, looking after him smilingly, little dreamed of the errand that was to bring him back again.

The dull dreary evening, with the snow still dizzily whirling, was closing in. Indeed but for the ghastly illumination of the reflection from the snow on the ground, it would now be dark. The peaked roof of the trading-house looming up among the flakes before Jock Lesly knew that he was near it, so stanchly he strode through the deep drifts, was of a benignant aspect to his mind, and he loved it. As he sounded a whistle, that Duncan or Dougal or whatever henchman awaited his coming should perceive his arrival and admit him to the domestic fortress, he noticed how the smoke was flaring up from that flue of the chimney devoted to the hearth so craftily hidden below. His heart warmed at the thought of his ingleside in his subterranean home.

"I hinna seen my bairn a' the day but by a wee gliff here awa' an' there awa'. If the lassie were in Charlestoun now I couldna believe it," he said to himself as he heard the clatter of the bars falling within. "I'll mak her sing some o' thae auld sangs the nicht, when her voice sounds sae like her mither's, an' then me an' the gillie-packmen an' Luckie Meg will a' sing the chorus an' drink some flip. An' it can snaw an' sleet, an' the wind can blaw an' bleat, an' awa' doun there by the red ingle-neuk we'se never ken it at a'."

Nevertheless when he was inside and the door secured anew, he said to the under-trader, who stood swinging the lantern, "Dougal, whilk o' thae bales o' blankets did Miss Lilius open the morn, — the lamb's wool or the yowe's wool? An' how mony did she send to the fort?"

Dougal Micklin opened his eyes wide. "Neither the ane nor the t' other!" he exclaimed jealously. "An' what for suld she send blankets to the fort?"

But Jock Lesly would not believe this. Had he not the word of the recipient of her bounty, that is the commandant of the fort,— and he truly thought that Howard must have suggested it! — that she had given him the trader's blankets to wrap up his prisoner?

“For whether it's the lamb's wool or the yowe's wool, they are baith verra gude, and ower gude to be given awa' gratis,” Jock Lesly argued. “For sic-like emergencies we brought them out frae Carolina, not for the summer time! We forecast that cauld weather might catch thae carles at the fort without kiver, and Captain Howard might buy them, not beg them. He is the commandant of his majesty's fort, not a gaberlunzie man! It's his bounden duty, even suld it cost him a wee penny o' thae short funds he bleats about, to protect his captives frae suffering frae the inclement weather as a humane man, and as a commandant it's in the reg'lar way o' business. I never heard o' sic a request onless it was made o' Providence. We'se a' ask Providence for *onything*, — even to forgie us our debts that we made oursel's, — an' I'll be bound Captain Howard wad say, ‘Forgie us our debts, *an' interest on same!*’”

He began to laugh satirically, then became suddenly silent, for as the lantern swung before a row of shelves, the light revealed the blankets in question, duly baled, with not a cord cut nor a fold shaken out.

He did not wait for the under-trader to complete a laudatory account of them, upon which Dougal had launched out as if he sought to sell them to auld Jock himself, but which was purely mechanical, declaring that they were of a fine quality and a heavy weight and could not be had cheaper in Charlestown, notwithstanding the great expense of carriage to the trader; that they were no designed for the Indian trade but for such gentles as might —

“Be at the fort an' afeard o' freezin',” interrupted Jock Lesly sardonically. “But thae gentles would rather warm

their taes at a guinea than in a blanket that they have to pay for, man ! ‘Forgie us interest on same !’” And down Jock Lesly went upon the rungs of his ladder and into his ain ha’ house.

Very cheerful it looked. The supper was already on the board, the hearth swept, and the fire flaring. The little flax-wheel at which Lilias sat so often at night was at one side, silent and motionless, and great buffalo-skins lay before the hearth. No lamp glowed from the little chamber beyond, and Jock Lesly stopped short at the sight of the black darkness within.

“Where is Miss Lilias, Luckie ?” he asked of old Meg, busied in brewing the tea.

“I dinna ken,” she replied casually ; then looking up, she added, “In the tradin'-house maist likely. She has been flittin’ in an’ out a’ the day, except for the last twa hours or sae.”

“There is not a soul in the trading-house !” cried Jock Lesly, with a sudden cold clutch at his heart.

Snatching a candle from the table he quickly searched her little chamber, the passage, the anteroom, all in vain ! It was but a small place after all, this ha’ house, and easily traversed.

Then he called her, his great rich resonant voice sounding from ceiling to floor, from wall to wall, evoking a train of echoes, and alack with so grievous a tremor in it that in listening the tears could but start. The gillies, the under-trader had scoured every nook and cranny in the trading-house and found naught. They looked at each other with white scared faces, each repeating in astonishment at intervals, as if they could not credit the marvel, “She isna here ! She isna here !”

Jock Lesly, with an awful sense of responsibility, thought of his wife, dead so long ago,—had he thus discharged the sacred trust of the care of their only child !

There was not a moment to be lost, although perhaps hours had already been wasted. Jock Lesly's staunch courage rallied to meet the emergency. All his life hereafter he might expend in grief, but the present belonged to Lilius, and every force it could compass should be consecrated to her service. He plunged through the whirl of snow, still falling in the dense darkness; the tears that had poured unrestrained, unheeded, shed unconsciously down his white cheeks, froze upon them, and tiny icicles trembled upon his eyelashes. But he did not sob; his breath held steady; his teeth were set, his every nerve was tense, controlling his great physical strength that it might better seize any opportunity of her rescue. The under-trader distinctly remembered having seen her early in the afternoon returning from the fort and walking with her collie toward the river. The collie had since reached home, and with this testimony that she was no longer in the securities of Fort Prince George they gathered the little group of packmen about them in a close squad, and looking grimly to the priming of their pistols they forcibly searched the Muscogee camp just outside the works, thinking those troublous half-drunken wights might have intercepted her as she came from the fort with the intention of holding her for ransom when the terror at her disappearance should be at the maximum.

Although taken by surprise and obviously astounded by the accusation, the Muscogees could furnish no information, and their camp betrayed not a trace of her presence. This hope dashed, the party followed successively every glimmering *ignis fatuus* of a possibility that each could suggest; one remembered that a settler's wife had a child named in compliment "Lilius," and as it was suddenly ill and near to death, she might have visited it; another recounted the fact that an old Indian woman near Keowee fascinated her with antiquated fables, which she valued and loved to hear; another, upheld by superstition, insisted on

repairing to Keowee to consult the cheerataghe and have them work a spell to reveal her whereabouts; and while this was in progress Jock Lesly required the headmen to search the town and the adjacent series of Cherokee habitations, once almost consecutive, from Kulsage (Sugar Town), about a mile above and even at that time extending far down the valley, toward the site of Sinica, burned by the British during the Cherokee War. Hours passed in these fruitless efforts, and at last, when each lure had finally flickered out in the darkness of despair, Jock Lesly turned again as a final hope to the fort. He would consult the last man who saw her there, the sentry at the gate, for perchance she might have expressed to him some inkling of her intention to go elsewhere than home. The gillies all eager, zealous, plunging through the drifts followed him; now and again they fell over the submerged stumps of the clearing and wandered out of their course and far afield, but Jock Lesly as if by instinct avoided every impediment, and albeit the whirl of flakes obscured all intimation of that blended glimmer and hazy aureola that were wont to mark the site of the fort by night, he reached the gate as unerringly as if the bastions, the barracks, the flag on the tower of the block-house were flaunting in the bold light of day.

None was so swift as he of all the light young fellows, but a moment after the sentry's challenge rang upon the chill night air he heard the ice of the broad moat crack with a great splash, as Duncan, mistaking the direction of the gate, fell into the frozen water of the ditch, and much splutter and torrid exclamations as he scrambled out. The noise attracted the attention of the sentinel in the tower of the block-house, and the sharp report of his musket, as he fired a warning into the air, brought out the main-guard before the corporal could reach the sentry at the gate.

In another moment there was a great commotion upon the parade, erstwhile so dark and silent. A shifting of

lanterns here and there threw long cone-shaped shafts of light down the snowy expanse, illuminating in limited sections a log building near at hand, with its drift-laden eaves and window-sills, and all the atmosphere a silent, palpitating mysterious motion as the flakes still whirled. The glitter of the scarlet and steel of the armed guard, its expectant aggressive mien, its quick tramp and alert bearing might seem to offer a sort of reassurance with its note of ready confidence. And indeed Jock Lesly's hope revived, albeit the jaunty military manner of the young officer of the day was at variance with his anxious intent troubled face, revealed by the lantern held aloft that he might descry his visitor's care-worn white lineaments.

"Help you to find a trace? See the last man who saw her? That must be the sentry at the gate — and the next, the prisoner himself."

As to learn from the officer of the guard the name of the sentinel who had been posted at the gate at that hour and since relieved was a work of more or less time, the interval could obviously be employed in interrogating the prisoner himself as to the possible intimations of her immediate intentions that Lilius might have expressed when she quitted his cell. The permission of the commandant would be necessary, — but here suddenly was the commandant himself, roused from sleep by the stir, and with his voice kind and reassuring.

"Never fear, dear fellow," he said, passing his arm fraternally through the quaking Lesly's, "we'll find her if we have to search the Indian country inch by inch. They'll never dare to harm her, for they will hold her for ransom. I can feel for you, for have I not two daughters of my own?"

But as they strode together through the guardroom, with its flaring fire and its tramping, thronging, military inmates, and opened the inner door to the dark and chill military

prison beyond, Captain Howard's sentiments fell far the other side of friendly, for there, her golden head pillow'd on the hard table, her mantle of otter fur drawn close about her ears, her feet perched upon the rung of the chair, sat fast asleep the trader's daughter, while the great flakes of snow jingled crystalline and keen against the glass of the window, and the dark hours merged deep into the mid-glooms of the night.

And Captain Howard's valuable prisoner was gone ! His prisoner — whom valiant men had risked their lives to secure. His prisoner — whom hundreds of miles of cruel forced marches, privations incredible, and dangers unnumbered had brought at last to his door. His prisoner — whom other commanders had tried in vain to take, for whose capture many other plans of specious wiles had failed and fallen short. His prisoner — on whose triumphant delivery to the military and civil authorities in Charlestown his majority depended. This prisoner — gone, gone ! And in his stead, in his secure cell with not a bar broken, not a sentry bribed, no vigilance relaxed, was a girl, just awakened, half frozen, all bewildered and beginning to cry.

Jock Lesly caught the officer's first outburst of dismay and surprise and rage as a man might a blow, putting up his arm to guard his face.

"Hegh, Captain," he said, his hand clasping the girl's as she cowered and blinked before the light that coldly fell upon the bare walls, the high window, the dusty floor, all infinitely bleak and gloomy. "I'se gae nae furder in a' this gear ! Let but the bairn get to the fire ! I confess ! I'm bound to confess ! My heart can haud sic a care o' deceit nae langer ! 'T was me that planned to liberate the callant ! I sent the lassie here to win ye by a trick an' to turn him loose drest in sic gear as hers an' to tak his place. 'T was me, Captain, an' I surrender !"

Great as were the variant urgencies of the situation, the

cold coerced the group mechanically toward the fire in the guardroom, and they stood on the broad hearth, the soldiers withdrawing a few paces to give them space. The glittering muskets had been all stacked anew; the open door showed a broad lane of light gleaming down the snowy parade outside, the flakes still madly whirling. Captain Howard in his hastily assumed military uniform, with his ungartered hose wrinkled and loose, and evidently unconscious that he still wore a red flannel nightcap with a queer tassel, had a touch of the grotesque, in contrast with the dapper perfection of the ensign's regimentals with his up-all-night expectation as officer of the day. All looked in dismay, in growing anger, in gathering doubt at Jock Lesly.

The trader stanchly returned their gaze. The shoulders of his great match-coat were covered with snow, which was beginning to drip as it thawed with the heat of the fire, and he held pressed close to his side his golden-haired daughter. She was fully awake now, and looking out with alert, wide-eyed expectation from her mantle of otter fur drawn partially over her head.

“Jock Lesly,” cried the captain, “you are lying! Why should you, always a loyal subject, with the interest of your trade dependent upon the preservation of the peace with the Cherokees, set free this turbulent Laroche, this stirrer-up of strife along the frontier?”

“Ou,—ay,” said Jock Lesly, holding up his chin and gazing about him speculatively as if he looked for his inspiration in the air, “a’ that is verra true; but this lad hae eat o’ my salt up in the Tennessee country, an’”—

“You are lying!” cried the officer angrily, “and if you were not, it would be as much as my life is worth to tell you so, even with my guard around me! You know, and I know, that the child did it of her own accord,—and for what, missy? Why did you liberate the man?”

“Ye’ll no ask the bairn questions, Captain Howard!”

interposed Jock Lesly angrily. "I stand here ready to tak the responsibility an' answer for the deed ! The lassie is no accountable for what she says ! She 's cauld, half starved ! I surrender ! I surrender ! It 's no the lassie's will that brought her here ! I sent her ! 'T was me, her cruel father ! She is cauld ! I surrender ! I " —

"I let the prisoner out !" said Liliias suddenly, and her voice rang in that grim guardroom like some sweet string of a harp, keyed so high above any vibrations to which it was accustomed, yet rich and resonant with its fullness of tone. "I let him out because he was betrayed by my word. I tauld Callum MacIlvesty that he was French, for he had avowed it to me ; but I was thinkin' then 't was known to a' the warld, an' sae Callum MacIlvesty tauld you, Captain Howard, that he was no Tam Wilson, as Lieutenant Everard took him to be, but French, and ye sent to tak him. An' now since I hae nae treachery to answer for, — for *I'm* no keeper o' the guardhouse here, — I 'll gae to gaol or where ye will wi' a free heart. I care na for naught !"

She turned her face and golden head against her father's great snowy coat as he once more futilely ejaculated, "The bairn 's cauld ! it 's gey cauld weather ! and she disna ken what she is sayin' !"

But Captain Howard, after an eager consultation aside with several officers of the garrison, summoned by the unusual commotion, and a survey of the conditions of the raging storm, returned to the questioning of Liliias.

"And at what time did this happen, mistress ? What hour was it when you saw fit to turn the king's prisoner loose upon the country ?"

"Five minutes scant after you gave me leave to speak wi' the callant ; an' after he was gone I stude the cauld as lang as I could, thinking to gie him a fair start, an' then I drapped aff in a wee bit nap. It 's ower cauld comfort ye gie to your puir prisoners, Captain Howard."

"And what direction did he take?" the officer asked eagerly.

"Ah-h!" she cried, her red lips showing her white teeth, her nodding head setting her golden hair to glimmering beneath the brown otter fur, her eyes shining with triumph, "it's *him* that didna say! He is the sodger-man to keep his plans in the sole o' his boot."

Her father pressed her head smotheringly against the folds of his great coat. "Whist, hinny, whist!" he exclaimed vacuously; "I surrender, Captain! I surrender! The bairn's but a bairn when a' is said! She kens na what she is sayin'; an' I mak nae doubt, too, she is tellin' lees."

"I make no doubt that *you* are telling lies!" said the captain in despair.

For with full ten hours' start, the escaped prisoner, himself a military man of much experience, of tried courage, of crafty resource, and moreover singularly well acquainted with the conditions of the country, could set at defiance any pursuer who should enter upon the chase in darkness, in intense cold, in a furious snowstorm, and in absolute ignorance of the direction which the fugitive had taken. The passage of the night with the late wintry dawn would add some seven hours to the fair start she had contrived for him. The commandant was nettled by the consciousness that this advantage might have been somewhat abridged by a trifle more precaution; for although no supper was served the prisoner, he being expected to reserve such portion as he desired from his dinner for that purpose, as was the habit, for which an allowance was duly made, the cell had been visited by the officer of the day when making his rounds. The girl was still soundly sleeping, and doubtless did not hear the opening of the door as the officer of the day unlocked it and glanced in. It was already dark, and by the faint glimmerings of the lantern held outside for him by the corporal accompanying him upon his rounds, he saw

the bare walls and floor, and in the single chair a muffled figure leaning upon the table, presumably asleep or plunged in deep dejection, the head bowed upon the arms. It never occurred to him that this shadowy presence in the bleak gloom could be other than the exhausted and travel-worn prisoner, whom he did not wish to rouse unnecessarily. The officer's duties were many and pressing at this hour and called him elsewhere. Therefore, closing the door and turning the key, he thought no more of the captive till he saw the golden head of the changeling when the mystery was revealed.

Captain Howard, who had given the girl access to the cell, could ill accuse the subaltern of neglect of duty, and the commandant himself could hardly have been expected to guard against masterly strategy in the quarter whence it had emanated.

Messengers were presently ready to start out with the first intimation of a lull in the storm or the peep of day to warn all the Cherokee towns of reprisal should they dare to harbor the fugitive, for that Laroche would return to the friendly Cherokee strongholds hardly admitted of a doubt in the mind of Captain Howard. He had not sufficient troops at command to awe the Indians into surrendering the fugitive, but he hoped that the passive force of the treaty and its advantages, otherwise annulled, might avail.

Captain Howard was a man of magnanimity. Even with the cup of well-earned success dashed from his lips he had the good feeling to pity the father,—his own daughters were far away in England,—as Jock Lesly continually ejaculated, "*I surrender, Captain!* The wean's no responsible! *I surrender!*"

"Jock," he said, "you need not forswear yourself. We all know that you would not have jeopardized the fair interests of the Indian trade for all the Johnny Crapauds who ever passed the tongue of a buckle through a sword-belt,—

not even if instead of your salt he had eaten your whole station ! Miss Lilias Lesly here, for reasons seeming to herself good and fitting " — he cast upon her an acrid glance — " set the man free, — for which she is under arrest, and " — intercepting a wild bleat of paternal protest — " will remain so in your ain ha' house under your watch and ward ; and we have no doubt she will be produced when summoned, and you will give your faithful recognizance to that effect."

He was reflecting that it would answer every purpose to detain the girl thus, for while her punishment might result should the matter continue of importance, it would otherwise hardly be contemplated by the colonial authorities in view of the unpopularity of such a step.

Jock Lesly was in such haste to sign and seal a paper betokening this clemency that he could hardly hold the sputtering quill ; and during this solemn ceremony the irrepressible Lilias broke out laughing with hysterical glee, and requested Captain Howard to put into a wee corner o' that paper the promise he had given her that she "suld hae a' thae blankets that were ne'er brought to the fort, afore the sodgers suld steal them a'."

" Thae bit duds were unco gude duds," she remarked fleeringly of these immaterial comforts.

XXI

CALLUM MACILVESTY had been soon at Jock Lesly's side to afford him such succor and countenance as was possible under the circumstances. He asked for leave to aid him in transporting Lilias, so stiff with the cold was she, back to the cave house, where she sat on the buffalo rug before the flaring fire, her glittering hair all tumbling about her shoulders, her eyes shining with triumph, and laughing with gay outbursts of flattered joy to learn how wretched they had all been because of her absence, and how wrong and wicked they esteemed her sudden arbitrary release of the prisoner.

"I amna sorry," she protested, "except for that the callant hae on my gude red rokelay, an' my best puce-colored serge gownd, an' my gude murrey screen, wi' only ae wee tear in the weft o' it, — an' I 'se warrant I 'll no see a' that braw gear again!"

It was Callum who sought to impress her with the magnitude of the offense that she had committed, for Jock Lesly cared for naught else on earth save that she was safe and sat once more on the rug before the blazing fire of the ha' house.

"An' what care I how far ye went an' how hard ye fared to tak him, Callum!" she cried indignantly. "Gin I hadn'tauld you the callant was French, you wad ne'er hae kenned it. An' ye tauld yon Captain Howard — that bluidy-minded chiel! I wuss he was in his ain cauld tolbooth to freeze stiff like my nainsell!"

"Whist, whist, hinny!" remonstrated Jock Lesly. "Callum wadna hae tauld the lad was French had he kenned you wad wuss to keep it secret; wad ye, Callum?"

With this direct appeal the Highland soldier, sitting in his armchair opposite Jock Lesly at the fire, with Lilias between them on the rug, gazed steadily into the glowing coals. He could not evade the question.

“Yes,” he answered, “I wad ! I wad ha’ tauld e’en if Lilias had bid me keep a quiet sough aboot it !”

“Na, Callum ! surely na !” exclaimed Jock Lesly irritably. “Ye wadna vex the bairn !” For Lilias had lifted her head with its wealth of flaring hair, and was gazing at Callum with intent, questioning, speculative eyes. “Ye care too muckle for Lilias for that !” Jock Lesly prompted him.

“I care more for my oath, for my duty, than for any lassie alive !” protested the blunt soldier.

There was a moment’s silence, while the fire roared and the smoke rushed up the chimney into the wild wintry storm without, of which they here heard naught. Jock Lesly, with a knitted brow, filled his pipe and said no more. Callum, his glass poised upon his knee, gazed steadfastly into the flames, and Lilias, with dewy, gleaming eyes fixed upon him, suddenly exclaimed, as if in delighted reminiscence, “Ou, ay, that was what Tam Wilson said ! His oath, his honor aboon a’ ! No woman’s wile, no woman’s smile could win him awa’ ! Ah, the leal heart he had ! That is what Tam Wilson aye said !”

“I care na for Tam Wilson, nor for what he said !” declared the dour Callum glumly.

“Not the ane you kenned !” cried Lilias. “*This* Tam Wilson ye never saw !”

The Highland soldier thought the cold and excitement and anxiety had shaken her balance a trifle.

“But Callum,” she persisted, “suppose it wad gar me like you better if you had hid that the puir lad is French ?”

“I wadna hae dune it ! I wadna hae hid it !” He shook his head sadly, and her father stared at him in amazement.

Inch by inch he seemed renouncing his chance for the girl's good graces.

"A-weel, a-weel," she said slowly. "But since a's come an' gane, an' the march was for naething, an' the prisoner is flitted, an' I was frozen wi' cauld an' misery, an' am like to be sent to Charlestoun to answer for my crimes, ye can say now, lad, that ye are verra sorry that ye disclosed my gossip to your officer, an' ye wadna do it again if it were to be done anew! Ye will say that?" She looked at him with keen expectant eyes.

"I wad do it all the same," he protested deliberately. Then, "Lilias, why wad ye torment me wi' a' these questions? They tear out my heart!"

"I sall ne'er forget it!" she cried. "Ye did it against my wull. An' now ye say that if ye had the chance anew ye wad e'en do it agen, though I suld *hate* ye for it!"

"It's my oath, Lilias! My duty! I canna look to you instead o' thae great obligations. I suld do it again an' again, whate'er ye might say or feel, an' keep my oath till death!"

She suddenly broke out laughing afresh, in shrill sweet ecstatic joy. "That Tam Wilson! Wha wad think! That Tam Wilson at last!"

She seemed enigmatic to them both, but they hardly had space to read the riddle, for Callum, recognizing the passage of time, sprang up to return to the fort before his limited leave expired. He ran briskly up the ladder with Jock Lealy clambering after him to take down the barricade to let him out, and to secure the bars subsequent to his exit. There was still fire upon the hearth of the great trading-house, and a dull red glow suffused its dusky brown spaces. It was only as Lesly turned to close the door of the counter that he noticed that Lilias, agile enough despite the congealed condition she so graphically described, had followed also, and after the soldier had sprung down the

front steps and strode off through the snow the two, father and daughter, stood for a moment gazing into the vast dark stormy wilderness, permeated by the sense of silent unseen motion in the whirling flakes, of which only the nearest were visible in the red glow of the dying fire from within.

"Hegh, come, bairnie, we 'se e'en steek the door," Lesly said.

The lantern in his hand showed her face to be all sweetly smiling. She was looking into the blank voids of the snowy gloom and carrying first one hand and then the other to her lips with an engaging free curve and tossing each toward the wilderness.

"And what now?" he demanded, staring owlishly down at her in amaze.

"Just throwing a wheen kisses to Tam Wilson, — oh puir Tam Wilson! Wha wad hae thought he wad e'er win hame agen!"

"Wow!" said her father glumly. "Tam Wilson! — drat Tam Wilson, I say! We hae had an unco pother ower Tam Wilson, now!"

But she ran in ahead of him laughing in great glee, and he overheard her in her little chamber while she disrobed for bed talking about Tam Wilson and Tam Wilson to Luckie Meg, who answered acquiescently to whatever she said, "Ou, — ay! I 'se warrant!" and apparently gave scant heed, even if she heard at all.

For some weeks Callum MacIlvesty felt anew that he was admitted into a sort of Paradise in frequenting the ha' house, albeit his heart was sore. The rescue that she had planned and achieved for the prisoner at such risk and suffering to herself argued much for the strength of her attachment to Laroche, and this forbade hope even when hope seemed most possible. She herself was so gay, so whimsically cheery, so blithe about the hearth, where the Highlander loved to sit as of yore with her father. She noted Callum's

depressed mien, and ascribing it to the fruitless result of the long laborious march and triumphant capture, argued that he had done all that he could and more than any other man would, his whole duty, and the sequence was the affair of Captain Howard, — and then remarked most pertinently that if she were that officer and had no better a tassel to a nightcap than that frayed thing he sported in public at the guard-house, she would resign from the army!

In order to prove that Captain Howard had himself sustained no damage in the loss of his notable prisoner, she cited the fact that the war with France was now over, cessation of hostilities had been announced on the 21st of January, and since the treaty had been signed in February, it had become known that the French forts, Toulouse, Tombecbé, Condé, were to be surrendered as early as English officers could be detailed to receive the transfer. All prisoners were to be released, — among those specially demanded she had seen in the Gazette the name of Lieutenant de Laroche, — already escaped though he was!

But all this, though so prettily urged, did not suffice to lift the gloom that weighed on Callum's mind. He was soon to say farewell, to rejoin the Forty-Second, to go he knew not whither, nor when to return!

It was one day when he was thus a-mope, as Lilius was wont to describe his state of mind, that Callum discovered her secret, if so candid an emotion can be so called. The ha' house had fallen into its ancient habitudes cannily enough, as if sorrows had never menaced it, and Lilius in her brilliant blue gown with roses scattered adown its white stripes sat at her wheel spinning as heedfully and dexterously as if she had never fashioned toils of more significance. Callum on the settle, his arms folded, his head a little bent, gazed into the red coals. All that he had once hoped, nay expected, was annulled by the sentiments implied in her release of Laroche, and the resentment she

had expressed toward himself for revealing aught that she had told him, albeit she had not bespoken secrecy. Therefore he experienced a revulsion of feeling so complete, so acute, as almost to resemble pain in its breathless keenness. He had suddenly lifted his eyes and caught hers fixed upon him with an expression he had never seen in them before, wistful, smiling, yet serious, and deeply tender. His heart gave a great plunge and every nerve was tense. He rose, and still looking at her, as if he feared she might vanish like some lovely dream, advanced across the hearth. He sat down beside her in her father's chair, still seeking to read — the dullard! — the obvious mystery of the sapphire light in her eyes.

"Lilias," he said clumsily and all tremulous, "have you something to tell me?"

"I trow not!" she exclaimed, her face roseate with smiles and blushes, but giving a lofty nod of her golden head. "I was thinking, man, you may hae something to tell to me!"

"Ah, Lilias, I hae tauld it sae often!" he cried bewildered.

"An' sae you are tired o' telling it?" she retorted. "Eh, sirs, to be tired sae early!"

"I can never be tired of telling it, Lilias, if only you will listen to it, — how I love you more and more day by day!"

"It's just as weel, then," — she cast a radiant smile upon him as she bent anew to her wheel, — "for I expect to listen to it — that is — whiles — at orra times — when I hae naething better to do — as lang as I live."

It was not in Callum's scheme of love-making to suggest the suddenness of this acceptability of a suit so long urged. Luckie Meg herself could not have assented more acquiescently than he in every detail that Lilias chose to propound. It was only once, in the course of those long sunless afternoons in the cavern, with the red glow of the

fire about them and the impenetrable walls to fend off the alien world so far away from their consciousness, when all their talk was of their mutual experience of the sentiment that swayed them, what each had felt and thought, that Callum showed symptoms of rebellion — being informed that she looked upon him and he might consider himself as "Tam Wilson."

"But I will not!" cried Callum, ready to put the question to the torture at once. Jealousy is not so easily vanquished. Indeed it hardly dies even under the heel of victory!

"Not the ane that you knew," she stipulated. "Just ane auld love o' my ain! He wad put his oath before all. An' he loved a woman well, but honor mair! an' he had no deceit nor guile in his heart (though I hinna forgot about your report to Captain Howard, neither, an' I 'll sort ye weel for it some day), an' he had no false nations nor false tongues (he had mickle ado to speak his ain), an' no false names (' Tam Wilson ' bein' laid to him because he was sae like ' Tam Wilson '). An' I suld hae kenned ye earlier for him, — though your hair hae aye got a place that is streakit wi' brown an' lighter brown an' I think it wadna show gin it were brushed backward, — but I aye loved the look o' ye, only I never saw ye put to the test, and sae I thought ye were just plain ' Callum McIlvesty.' But now I ken ye are Tam Wilson!"

And smiling at him with lips so joyous, so red and sweet, Callum yielded the point and assumed in this wise the sobriquet which personified her girlish ideal.

Still it nettled him grievously. She might have called her ideal "Callum."

"Whist, lad, whist," said her father to him one day, "an' I 'se tell ye something ye will ne'er find out frae her."

Then with much solemnity, with circumspection, he pulled out a paper from his wallet, to which he could not have paid more respectful and close attention if it had been

a schedule of prices current. It was a letter from Laroche, dated on the French man-of-war *L'Aigle*, and was addressed jointly to Jock Lesly and his daughter. It was an offer of marriage to Lilias, and begged that they would fix a date to meet him in Charlestown, where the ceremony might be performed by both Catholic and Protestant clergy. It set forth his rank, means, and expectations, which were very considerable, and gave references which were both accessible and unimpeachable.

"An', lad," said Jock Lesly, looking owlishly at Callum while leaning over the counter at the trading-house where he had driven so many bargains, "seeing that she is my only child, and that ensigncy of yours is gey far to seek, and this man is a sure enough lieutenant, not o' red Injuns but of the French army, and is a chevalier or a sieur, — there's no rebate on that, — and has lands an' a château and some income, and the lassie seemed fond o' him on the Tennessee, and here she set him free when they had him by the heels at the fort, — why I downa say, but I advised her — weel, to marry the fallow, when we go down this spring, an' gae to live in France. It's far awa', is France, but they hae gude glimmerings o' sense about their weaving there. I hae seen some gude camlets frae France, an' ye ken there's no place like Lyons for silk — though that's na for my trade neither."

Callum's heart sank for the mere consciousness that his happiness had trembled in such jeopardy. "And what did she say?"

"Lilias? — why, she said ae sentence, 'He isna Tam Wilson!' Sac, lad, if ye will be advised by me, ye 'll be Tam Wilson as near as ye can find out how!"

About this time an ensigncy was secured for Callum through his family's influence, and when he returned shortly to Charlestown he met there Everard, who was in a state of exuberant and facetious triumph in the manner of the

escape of Captain Howard's prisoner, having earlier eluded him also, and who was the first to congratulate the young Highlander upon the attainment of his commission and the near approach of his wedding day. For in the early summer Callum and Liliias were married in Charlestown and sailed away, leaving auld Jock still deeply immersed in the problems of the Indian trade. These problems became much simplified by the withdrawal of the French from the country, and soon the Cherokees began to present those curious symptoms of degeneracy which seem the inevitable incident of the first stages of civilization, an interregnum, so to speak, which ensues upon the last vestiges of the ancient status. Thereafter they were only formidable locally and in small predatory bands, and represented no more a definitely organized menace to the British provinces. In the course of some years a great happiness and source of pride fell to the lot of Jock Lesly. The reversal of the attaider had restored the chief of the ancient house of MacIlvesty to his pristine position with others of his kinsmen of minor rank. By reason of several deaths Callum MacIlvesty succeeded to a baronetcy, and Jock Lesly, despite his quondam bluff expressions of scorn of a title, found its taste exceedingly sweet as applied to his daughter; he was proud too of Callum's rise in the army through successive promotions for gallant conduct in the field.

"He smacks his lips ower 'Captain Sir Callum an' Leddy MacIlvesty' as if the words were fitten to eat," Dougal commented dourly, "an' somehow he says 'em fifty times a day!"

There was another who heartily rejoiced in this advance of fortune when it came to his ears, for Lady MacIlvesty's beauty and what were called her "eccentricities" made her of some social note in her day. Laroche had loved the girl very truly for herself, and although he had sought to look upon her rejection of his suit as in a certain sense

an escape for himself, in view of her humble station, her plebeian father, her simple education and limited experience, and their incongruity with his objects of ambition and the sphere of his association, he could not entertain the reminiscence without a keen sentimental regret, albeit blended with tender pleasure to know that the world had gone well with her. He too had reached, as he deserved, promotion, and at no small danger, as the sabre slashes received in the hand-to-hand warfare of that day, and which disfigured his bland handsome face, might betoken. He lived several years after his retirement from active service. One who had known him in those halcyon days on the Tennessee River might hardly have recognized him later, so scarred, gray-haired, wrinkled, and very thin he had become, — a mere rack on which to hang his decorations and the ribbons of his orders. He had always been esteemed a man of unique ability, and his conversation was long valued by the judicious in the cafés and salons of Paris which he frequented. When he reached the discursive and reminiscent stage of advancing age, often, as the night would wear on in a choice company, he would discourse of high themes of national possibilities, and regretfully rehearse disastrous phases of the country's past that had fallen within his personal knowledge, — of the great territories that France had developed and forfeited; plans of empire that she had failed to utilize; strange peoples of martial values who had sought her protectorate in vain. Then he would revert to his own life among them, — reciting details of their curious customs and mysterious antiquity; telling thrilling stories of personal adventure, now of an escape from the menace of the torture and the stake, and now of his release from the trebly guarded stronghold of a British fort by the aid of a beautiful English lady of rank who loved him and whom he adored.

And although as he grew older and his audiences younger

they believed this unnamed English lady of rank to be entirely apocryphal, the tear was obviously genuine with which he sweetened his glass as he told that she was dead now, — years ago — ah yes — dead!

“*Il y a une autre vie! C'est une belle espérance!*” he would sigh, for he was always deeply religious. “But alas, that the sweets of this life are transitory!”

And presently he would be talking of the triumphs of engineering possible in that vast America. Sometimes he would trace out on the tablecloth with the aid of the scroll-like pattern of the damask the outline of the great bend of a river which he affirmed had singly saved that country to the English and reft it from the French, as its extraordinary obstructions to navigation prevented all adequate conveyance of munitions of war to the Cherokees, who held the balance of power. He would mark off the canal which he had purposed to build in the fullness of time, and the site he had selected for the barrier towns to guard the region of the portages, necessary to evade the obstructions, as a temporary substitute. The technical terms of the oft-told tale, the abstruse calculations of the elaborately demonstrated problem, would finally wear out the interest of his auditors; they would slip away one by one, and leave him bending over the table, gloating upon the symmetrical possibilities of his plan, bewailing its untimely frustration, seeing, instead of the blank cloth, that rich new land with its gigantic growths of primeval forests and those dizzy whirls of turbulent waters, that stretch out miles and miles impassably, where even now, despite the advance of modern science and the exorcising appropriations of Congress, the devils, *hottuk ookproose*, still dance in the riotous rapids and sing tumultuously as of yore.

NOTES



NOTES

1. Page 4. A detail of the incidents of this visit to the king in London and the consequent impressions made upon the minds of the Indians would be of much interest to the student of civilization. It is to be regretted that Lieutenant Henry Timberlake of Virginia, who accompanied the Cherokees to England, should have devoted so great a space in his "Memoirs" of that event (published in London in 1765) to plaintive accounts of his wrangling with governmental officials concerning his reimbursement for sundry expenses on their account, with which it seems he burdened himself without sufficient warrant, and to the effort to repel the insinuation that he undertook the enterprise of conducting them thither for his own personal profit, as impresario so to speak ; for the people of that city pressed in hordes to see them, many of the nobility as well as citizens of lower rank, and some, evidently without the knowledge of Lieutenant Timberlake, paid for the privilege. Beyond the strange dirge-like chant which Ostenaco sang on landing ; their indifference to the architecture of the Cathedral of Exeter ; their terror of the statue of Hercules with uplifted club which they saw at Wilton (they begged to be taken away immediately); their relish of the entertainments at Raneleigh, Vauxhall, and especially of the pantomimes at Sadler's Wells ; their admiration of the youth, personal beauty, and affability of the king, there is naught to indicate their attitude of mind. A contemporary account, however, in the "Annual Register" for 1762 gives a personal glimpse of them.

"Three Cherokee chiefs, lately arrived from South Carolina, in order to settle a lasting peace with the English, had their first audience of his majesty. The head chief called Outacite or Man-killer, on account of his many gallant actions, was introduced by Lord Eglinton, and conducted by Sir Clement Cottrell, master of ceremonies. They were upwards of an hour and a half with his majesty, who received them with great goodness, and they behaved in his presence with remarkable decency and mildness. The man who assisted as interpreter on this occasion, instead of one who set out with them, but died on his passage, was so confused that the king could ask but few questions.

"These chiefs are well-made men, near six feet high, their faces and necks coarsely painted of a copper colour, and they seem to have no hair on their heads. They came over in the dress of their country, consisting of a shirt, trowzers, and mantle, their heads covered with skull-caps and adorned with shells, feathers, earrings, and other trifling ornaments. On their arrival in London they were conducted to a house taken for them in Suffolk street, and habited more in the English manner. When introduced to his majesty the head chief wore a blue mantle covered with lace, and had his head richly ornamented. On his breast hung a silver gorget with his majesty's arms engraved. The other two chiefs were in scarlet, richly adorned with gold lace, and gorgets of plate on their breasts. During their stay in England of about two months they were invited to the tables of several of the nobility, and were shown by a gentleman, appointed for that purpose, the tower, the camps, and everything else that could serve to impress them with proper ideas of the power and grandeur of the nation; but it is hard to say what impression these sights made upon them, as they had no other way of communicating their sentiments but by their gestures. They were likewise conducted every day to one or another of the places of amusement, in and about London, where they constantly drew after them innumerable crowds of spectators, to the no small emolument of the owners of these places, some of which raised their prices to make the most of such unusual guests. Here they behaved in general with great familiarity, shaking hands very freely with all those who thought proper to accept that honour. They carried home with them articles of peace between his majesty and their nation, with a handsome present of warlike instruments and such other things as they seemed to place the greatest value on."

2. Page 5. The Indian phrases given in this volume are studied from sources as nearly contemporaneous as may be with the events herein narrated, both for the sake of verisimilitude and because of the multitudinous changes to which the aboriginal languages have since been subjected, for the purpose of classification in view of the diverse orthography of the earlier philologists, which varied, of course, according to nationality, French, German, or English.

It is interesting to note the differing estimate of the value which the learned place on this singular jetsam and flotsam of the seas of Time. The study of the aboriginal languages, apart from historical considerations, possesses great interest in the revelation of "new plans of ideas," as Monsieur Maupertuis

felicitously phrases methods of grammatical construction. "The Greek is admired for its compounds, yet what are they to those of the Indians!" exclaims the eminent philologist, Mr. Duponceau. "What would Tibullus or Sappho have given to have had at their command a word at once so tender and so expressive—*wulamalessohalian*, 'thou who makest me happy'? How delighted would be Moore, the poet of the loves and graces, if his language, instead of five or six tedious words, had furnished him with an expression like this in which the lover, the object beloved, and the delicious sentiment are blended and fused together in one comprehensive and appellative term. And is it in the language of savages that these beautiful forms are found!"

And yet in the learned work on America by Mr. Edward John Payne of University College, Oxford, still in course of publication, it is stated that "the majority of these languages, if not absolutely the lowest in the glossological scale, are as near the bottom as the student of the origin of speech could well desire." Of their polysynthetic features, which Mr. Duponceau so much admires, Mr. Payne speaks as of merely bunched words, regarding the holophrase as the primitive and simplest form of ignorant language, which in the development and weight of meaning is broken finally, producing in its disintegration parts of speech.

Lord Monboddo, in his "Origin and Progress of Language," founding his opinion partly on the testimony of Father Sagard's work, "Le Grand Voyage du Pays des Hurons," says of the Huron language, "It is the most imperfect of any that has ever been discovered;" whereas Mr. Duponceau finds it "rich in grammatical forms," and permits himself the expression "pompous ignorance" in alluding to the conclusions of his learned confrère.

The fact that Dr. Adam Smith as well as Lord Monboddo perceived in the tendency to incorporate in one word the meaning of a whole sentence an evidence of barbarism induces Mr. Duponceau to support the contrary opinion with "a lively example from Suetonius, *Ave Imperator, morituri* (those-who-are-going-to-die) *te salutant*. Since it has been discovered that the barbarous dialects of savage nations are formed on the same principles with classical idioms, it has been found easier to ascribe the beautiful organization of these languages to stupidity and barbarism than to acknowledge our ignorance of the manner in which it has been produced."

Humboldt says: "It is acknowledged that almost everywhere the Indian idioms display greater richness and more delicate gradations than might be supposed from the uncultivated state of

the people by whom they are spoken." Adair, who had forty years' personal experience among them, writing in 1775, claims that their languages give evidence of culture and scope of expression impossible to have originated with uncivilized tribes such as they were found. A singular circumstance concerning the "syllabic alphabet," presumed to have been invented by the Cherokee Sequoyah (John Guest) about 1820, would imply an origin at a far more ancient date. A stone engraved with this character was found by an agent of the Bureau of Ethnology in 1889 lying under the skull of a skeleton buried in an Indian mound, with every evidence of antiquity, on the north side of the Tennessee River, in the immediate vicinity of one of the old Cherokee towns. This is of more special interest as Adair and also Buttrick, in his "Antiquities," record that the Indians always claim to have once had scriptures, or a book, which for their sins they had lost to the white race. May not these quaint characters bear some relation to this tradition?

The "particular plural" for "we," which it seems occurs in all these languages, even found in the extinct Taensa dialect, — concerning the genuineness of the grammar of which so much interest was elicited some years ago on its publication, edited by Messieurs Adam and Parisot, — seems hardly worth the discussion bestowed upon it, as parallels exist in so many modern European languages, — *noi altri, nous autres, nosotros*, — and even the vernacular may offer a counterpart in "we-all" and "we-uns."

Lord Monboddo's idea, first presented to his attention by the blind poet, the Reverend Thomas Blacklock, "that the first language among men was music," has an interesting suggestion of confirmation in the speech of the Cherokees as described by Timberlake. "Their language is vastly aspirated, and the accents so many and various you would often imagine them to be singing in their common discourse." Bartram says of the sound of the Muscogulge (Muscogee) language, "The women in particular speak so fine and musical as to represent the singing of birds." Gayarre states that the word "Choctaw" means "charming voice," and was hence applied to the tribe.

8. Page 8. A letter from General Sir Jeffrey Amherst dated Albany, August 13, 1761, gives a particularized account of these destructive measures. "The country would have been impenetrable had it been well defended. Fifteen towns and all the plantations have been burned; above 1400 acres of corn, beans, and pease, etc., destroyed; about 5000 people, men, women, and children, driven into the woods and mountains, where having nothing to subsist upon they must either starve or sue for peace."

The fury of these measures after resistance had ceased is partly to be explained as retaliation for the Cherokees' breach of faith during the preceding year, in the massacre of the garrison of Fort Loudon after its capitulation, while on the march to Fort Prince George under the safe conduct and escort of the principal chiefs. All the officers, including the commandant, the unfortunate Captain Paul Demeré, fell in this indiscriminate slaughter except one, Captain John Stuart, who escaped and was afterward rewarded by a crown office for his courage and constancy in the siege. He was of the family of Stuart of Kincardine, Strathspey, Scotland, married into a South Carolina family, and previous to the American Revolution lived in Charlestown, where was born his son, who became an officer in the British army, General Sir John Stuart, Count of Maida, winning the signal victory of Maida over the French general Reynier, in Calabria in 1806. The garrison of Fort Loudon has a special interest as the first military force of civilization giving battle on the soil which is now Tennessee, its earliest sacrifice in the cause of human progress.

4. Page 18. Several of the elder writers describe such clever pastimes among the Indians. Timberlake records that while in the Cherokee country he witnessed this favorite pantomime, as well as another equally diverting, called "Taking the pigeons at roost."

5. Page 31. It is said that the Indians when discovered had among them no methods of ascertaining weight, and bought and sold exclusively by measure. Hence the incongruity of this locution in their speech has furnished an additional argument to the supporters of the theory of their Hebraic origin, suggesting an idiomatic survival of forgotten customs.

6. Page 56. So extreme and well founded was the prevalent terror of the torture by the Indians that once captured no immediate sacrifice was too great to evade the grimmer possibility. General David Stewart of Garth gives an instance in this region among the British troops at this time. "Montgomerie's Highlanders were often employed in small detached expeditions. In these marches they had numberless skirmishes with the Indians and with the irregular troops of the enemy. Several soldiers of this and other regiments fell into the hands of the Indians, being taken in an ambush. Allan Macpherson, one of these soldiers, witnessing the miserable fate of several of his fellow prisoners, who had been tortured to death by the Indians, and seeing them preparing to commence the same operations upon himself, made signs that he had something to communicate. An interpreter

was brought. Macpherson told them that provided his life was spared for a few minutes he would communicate the secret of an extraordinary medicine which, if applied to the skin, would cause it to resist the strongest blow of a tomahawk or sword, and if they would allow him to go to the woods with a guard to collect the plants proper for this medicine, he would prepare it and allow the experiment to be tried on his own neck by the strongest and most expert warrior among them. This story easily gained upon the superstitious credulity of the Indians, and the request of the Highlander was instantly complied with. Being sent into the woods he soon returned with such plants as he chose to pick up. Having boiled these herbs, he rubbed his neck with their juice, and laying his head upon a log of wood desired the strongest man among them to strike at his neck with his tomahawk, when he would find that he could not make the slightest impression. An Indian, leveling a blow with all his might, cut with such force that the head flew off to the distance of several yards. The Indians were fixed in amazement at their own credulity and the address with which the prisoner had escaped the lingering death prepared for him; but instead of being enraged at the escape of their victim, they were so pleased with his ingenuity that they refrained from inflicting further cruelties on their remaining prisoners."

7. Page 84. The disposition to compete for the Cherokee trade had earlier been the occasion of much remonstrance from Governor Glen of South Carolina to Lieutenant-Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia during their respective incumbency. The vexed question then seeming set at rest was revived later by Lieutenant-Governor Fauquier of Virginia. In his allusion to the subject, Jock Lesly possibly included Lieutenant Henry Timberlake of Byrd's Virginia Regiment, who had recently been on a visit to the Cherokee country, quitting it in the early spring, on March 10, 1762. But it is only fair to Lieutenant Timberlake to say that the Indians were pressing him to induce Virginia to open a trade with the Cherokees.

8. Page 182. Timberlake uses the spelling "Kanagatucko;" the name appears otherwise signed to the Articles of Capitulation of Fort Loudon, but of course in each instance the spelling is phonetic.

9. Page 244. This incantation is an extract from one of the most singular of the ancient Sacred Formulae of the Cherokees collected by Mr. James Mooney for the Smithsonian Institution.

10. Page 282. The title of Emperor of the Cherokee Nation was conferred by British authority on Moy Toy through Sir

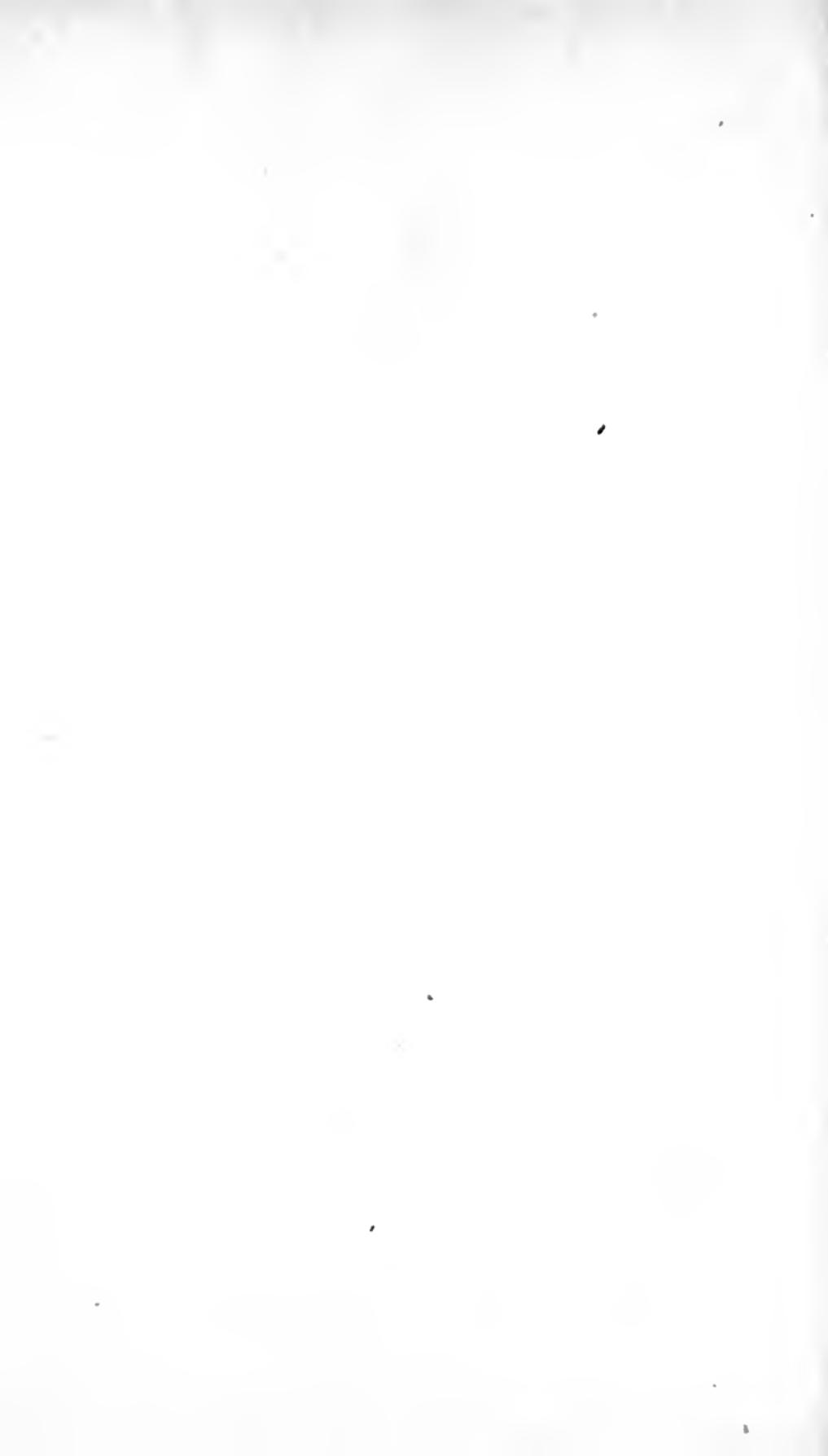
Alexander Cuming in 1730, but this proved no hindrance to the chief's acceptance of the same high title under the authority of the French government in 1736 through its emissary among the tribe, Christian Priber, a German Jesuit. Adair recounts some details of the latter's efforts to materialize Iberville's old scheme of unifying the Indian tribes, which were similar to the experiences in the same emprise of the earlier emissaries, and the futile ventures of Baron Dejean, Louis Latinac, and Laroche a score of years later.

11. Page 336. The history of the Indians is not a little complicated by the repetition of their names from one generation to another and of their war-titles, sometimes to be differentiated only by the names of their respective towns as a suffix, as Outacite (the Man-killer), of Citico, or Quorinnah (the Raven), of Huwhassee. Even their sobriquets are not to be relied upon for further identification. Another Mingo Push-koosh flourished among the Choctaws a generation earlier, and was the half brother of the celebrated Shulashummashabe (Red Shoes), who is himself often confounded with the chief of the Coosawdas, also known as "Red Shoes," long afterward, being active in Indian politics as late as 1789. The Choctaw "Red Shoes" enjoyed great esteem among the British, as did also the Cherokee "Little Carpenter" (more accurately translated as "Superlative Wood-carver"), in whose honor, indeed, an English ship was named and a British stronghold, before the Cherokee War, Fort Attakulla-Kulla.

12. Page 368. The climate of this southern region at this period seems to have won some renown for its extremes. An officer's letter from Fort Prince George, dated January 9, 1761, says: "I have been several winters in the north of Scotland and do not think I have ever felt it colder there than here at this time; the snow is in general three quarters of a yard deep, attended with very sharp frosts." As to the summer temperature, Governor Ellis has left it of record in a letter to John Ellis, Esq., F. R. S., dated Georgia, July 17, 1758, that he thought the inhabitants of this section "breathed hotter air than any other people upon earth." He takes pains to state that he made his observations with the same thermometer that he had had with him in the equatorial parts of Africa and in the Leeward Islands. Hewatt, the historian, ventures to protest, albeit deferring to the accuracy and learning of the erudite and traveled governor, and says that the mercury never so far exceeded the bounds of reason in South Carolina, and implies that he believed that these eccentricities were very rare in Georgia.

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